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THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

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INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

BEING THE

TWENTY-FIRST FERNLEY LECTURE

DELIVERED IN NOTTINGHAM, JULY 31ST, 1891

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1891

TO

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF METHODISM

THIS LECTURE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

WITH EARNEST PRAYER

THAT THEY MAY HAVE GRACE

TO STAND FAST IN THE FAITH OF THEIR FATHERS,

TOUCHING

THE INSPIRATION OF THOSE HOLY SCRIPTURES

WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEM

WISE UNTO SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN

CHRIST JESUS

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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THE INSPIRATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARIES.

It is not necessary to say a word as to the supreme importance of the subject about to be discussed. A moment's reflection will make that obvious. Upon the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures the Church of God ever has depended, and ever will depend, for her very existence. "We are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." While whole-hearted faith or half-hearted want of faith in this fundamental verity of the Christian religion must operate effectually for good or evil upon the spiritual life of every member of the Church; and as to those who undertake to act as watchmen upon the walls of Zion silence upon this subject is a pure impossibility, while correct or incorrect deliverances upon this theme make all the difference between the trumpet giving forth a certain or an uncertain sound. This is one of the burning questions of the hour. Upon no religious subject is the public mind so deeply interested as upon

this. If we could but come to a definite settlement of this, a host of other questions would settle themselves. It is very much with religion as with astronomy. As long as it was assumed that the earth was the centre of the solar system, all calculations were vitiated and all observations abortive; but as soon as the sun was made the centre, then, and then only, was the science placed upon a satisfactory foundation: so in religion. As long as reason, or the inward light, or the Church, is made the supreme authority, all is confusion and disorder; but as soon as God is accepted as the seat of authority in matters spiritual, then all becomes harmonious. The object of our inquiry is this: Has God disclosed His mind to man, and do we possess that disclosure in such fulness and integrity that, for all practical purposes, we know what "the will of the Lord" is? In prosecuting such an investigation, very much depends upon the method adopted. Modern science is the child of method—the inductive method; and theology is one of the inductive sciences. Just as the scientist goes to the works of God and examines and classifies the facts he observes there, ever working upon the well-approved axiom that every effect must have a cause, till he has brought all the phenomena into agreement, so the genuine student of the Word takes note of its language and grammar so as to ascertain "the mind of the Spirit"; and book by book and chapter by chapter passes under his scrutiny till he discovers the relation of part to part, and arrives at those essential truths which are the natural result of a combination of the whole. The *à priori* method has its uses. Some of its findings are very convincing, especially to a certain order

of mind; but it has been so abused by our opponents as to have fallen somewhat into discredit; for, while they "speak great swelling words of vanity" about "freedom of inquiry," and "remorseless criticism," and "the stern logic of facts," and "the strictly scientific method," their practice belies their professed principles, for they usually begin with the assumption that there is no such thing as the supernatural, that miracles are impossible, that God cannot reveal Himself to man, and that man cannot receive a revelation from God. The form of scientific investigation is gone through, but the sentence has been passed before the evidence has been looked at. All kind of violence is done to the truth to force it into agreement with their theories. They tamper with the text, or exclude an author from the Canon, so that of all methods theirs is the most unscientific. By such a course of procedure, science, as we know it to-day, could never have been built up, and the real facts of any department of knowledge never were and never will be discovered. The Bible is altogether unique. The highest production of the human intellect is literature; but the sacred writings, simply as literature, are immeasurably in advance of all other literature. The loftiest thing we get in any other book is genius, but here we have God. To the Bible, and to the Bible only, we must come to ascertain what divine inspiration is. It exists only here. No book was ever written about the Bible half so instructive as the Bible itself; and it is only by long, honest, patient study that the real nature of the inspired writings can be comprehended. Winckelmann, the art critic, was wont to tell his pupils to go and look at a certain statue—the Apollo Belvedere. "At

first," he said, "it may be you will think it a very ordinary work of art; but look at it again and again, go away and return to it, and the oftener you look at it, the more steadfastly you gaze on it and examine and study it, the more you will be convinced that it is one of the grandest specimens of genius the world has ever seen": and our advice is similar. Take that small library of books we call (because of its unity and pre-eminence) *the* Book, the Bible, and read it thoughtfully. At first, perhaps, you will not be particularly struck with it. You will find a good deal you do not understand. There may be some things that you even hesitate to accept. It may not come up to your expectations of what a God-inspired book should be. You will find long lists of names, in the shape of family and tribal registries, of little interest; laws and regulations respecting religious ceremonies which, at their best, were only shadows, and they have long ago fallen into disuse; some of its teaching adapted to the world's infancy will seem as out of place in this the period of its comparative maturity, as a book of nursery rhymes in the hands of a man of fifty. You will be disappointed perhaps that so much is made of what seem trifles, as, for instance, the dress of women and the cut of a man's hair, whether short or long; while questions, for the solution of which generation after generation have been heart-sick with longing, such as the origin of evil, the reconcilement of God's sovereignty and man's free agency, the mystery of Providence, the mode of the Triune Existence, the future abode and state of the lost and the saved, are treated with a reticence as obstinate as the silence of the dead. But, notwithstanding, read it over again and again, meditate

upon it, treasure it in your memory, and, may I not say, ask its Divine Author to instruct you in its meaning, and gradually its far-reaching harmonies will converge to a common centre; you will feel you are reading the eternal thoughts of God. The meaning will stand out in lines of light upon the page. You will find a spirit in those words with which your own spirit will hold converse. Beneath those forms of speech you will detect a living energy: "The words that I speak unto you," said Christ, "they are spirit, and they are life." God's voice will sound out of them into your innermost soul, and you will rise from your perusal of these God-breathed, God-breathing writings penetrated with the deepest and fullest conviction that this book is no other than the Word of the living God.

In a matter of such moment, a word should be said as to the spirit in which an investigation like the present should be conducted. It should be humble, docile, reverent —the spirit of a little child, knowing nothing, coming to the oracles of God to learn everything. The Bible asks no favours. It will not complain if you treat it as you would another book; but no man who has the least suspicion that it is the word of the Most High will treat it as he would the work of another author. Above all, there must be perfect loyalty to truth and a childlike trustfulness to follow wherever she may lead, assured that the goal to which she conducts us is of all places the safest and best. No doubt, to deny the divine origin of the Bible is to leave us without anything worth calling religion; it is to fling us back upon reason—inadequate reason, and conjecture, uncertain intuitions, and the opinions of men as fallible as

ourselves as to such matters as the immortality of the soul, and the nature of sin and its remedy. In a word, it means nothing less than a sliding back into paganism again. It may be a paganism as brilliant, as scholarly, as artistic, as philosophical, ah! and as debased and sensual as that of Athens, with an altar to the unknown God standing where St. Paul's cross-crowned cathedral stands to-day. But let not a thought of consequences deter us from following on wherever well-attested thought may lead. If the old traditional theology is false, let it go. Darkness, however dense, is better than a false light to lure us to bitter disappointment; better no hope at all than a spurious hope. They who blindly accept a lie for the truth of God are upon a par with those who change the truth of God into a lie. If the Bible is not the inspired Word of God, then our faith in it is a degrading superstition, and the sooner it be abandoned the better: nay, we may venture a step farther—if God has not revealed Himself to man, then most likely there is no God. At any rate, if He loves us so little that He does not wish us to know Him, we may rest assured the knowledge, if we had it, would be of no great advantage to us; so through the first article of our creed we might as well draw the pen, and we will henceforth talk no more of the Fatherhood of God, nor delude ourselves by laying the flattering unction to our hearts that He has the slightest interest in us. We will chant no more the siren song of redeeming grace; we will cease the Gospel lullaby with which we have been trying to rock the world to sleep in the cradle of carnal security. If no other virtue survive, let us cherish that of hating falsehood, and so let us come to our task free of all

prejudices and foregone conclusions. Fearless integrity, unflinching honesty, simplicity of intention, enthusiasm for righteousness,—these are qualities that constitute that purity of heart which sees God, if there be a God to see, and hears Him speak, if indeed He has ever spoken. Above all things, show no sign of anxiety about the truth. Truth is abundantly able to take care of itself. Welcome criticism, challenge criticism; the more remorseless and severe the better, the hotter the furnace the purer the gold. If it be that chaff is garnered with the wheat, let it be winnowed and the chaff scattered. It was said of Christ, "His fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor: the wheat He will gather into His garner, but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire;" and though Satan himself should be set to do this work, stand out of the way. There is a grand irony in thus dividing Satan against himself, and using the father of lies to destroy his own offspring. Truth loves testing. "Prove all things." "Try the spirits, whether they are of God." In some sense, scepticism is a duty. It is sometimes as mischievous to believe too much as to believe too little. We owe a debt to criticism that words cannot express. We owe it to Christ as a critic that the God-dishonouring traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees were severed as by a great gulf from the genuine Scriptures. We owe it to the Reformers that the Christian religion was freed from the pernicious superstitions of Popery. One set of critics are doing their utmost to obtain a correct and pure text of the sacred Scriptures. Another set are toiling out their lives to elucidate the text thus purified. In some instances, alas! we are sorely tempted to think that the prodigious industry and rare

ability, which for their own sake we must admire, are after all animated by a spirit hostile to religion; and when this is so, we must take note of it, and discount our opponents' opinions accordingly. If the ancient Church father was right, "the heart makes the theologian." If Bacon was correct when he said the human understanding was not a dry light, but received an infusion from the will and the affections, as we all know it does;—if Paul's declaration be true, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned;"—if no amount of training would make a blind man a judge of pictures, or a deaf man a critic of music, then no amount of learning could make an unchristian man appreciate the Christian religion; and we shall do well to look into the religious character of a person who sets up for a critic of the Bible, and value his utterances about the truth in proportion to his known antipathy to it. Learning is good in its way; but learning is not sufficient. There never were more diligent students of the letter of Scripture than those old Jewish Rabbis, Scribes, and Rulers, who failed entirely to see their ancient prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and who, in the blindness of their prejudices, put Him to death. The conflict between the truth and infidelity has resulted in immense gains to the Church. The Bible has been read as it never was before. Champions have been raised up, created by this warfare. Thousands of books have been written in defence of the faith that would never have been thought of if the faith had not been assailed. No sooner were the famous *Essays and Reviews* published than three hundred answers were at once forthcoming. Strauss published his *Life of Jesus* in

1836. Since that date there have been more lives of the Perfect Man published than during all the centuries preceding. A little healthy opposition is good. A storm now and then purifies the atmosphere. After all, the friends of the Bible greatly outnumber its foes. If numbers could settle the matter, it would be disposed of quickly. Taking into account the past and present, with equal learning and ability, there is little doubt the defenders of the faith would be in proportion to its assailants as ten to one. Of course, the latter create a deal more noise. We are told it was to the strains of martial music, their armour gleaming in the sun, that the French took up their position and formed themselves in battle array at Waterloo, while the English silently, almost sullenly, occupied the ground assigned them; but they were left in possession of the field notwithstanding. It is difficult to account for it, but somehow doubting, which is a sign of mental weakness, is looked upon as an evidence of strength of mind, and courage, and originality; and so many a man, who would otherwise have lived and died without being heard of, wins for himself a little temporary popularity by nibbling at the inspiration of the Scriptures, or quibbling about the Divinity of Christ. The most effectual way of dealing with all such is to give them plenty of sea room. You could not help them better than by raising opposition. The Gospel lived down Celsus and Porphyry and Julian in early times; it has survived, without seeming damage, the attacks of Herbert and Hobbes, and Shaftesbury and Hume, in the last two centuries, and of Strauss and Renan in this. Meanwhile, let us be cautious in judging the motives of others, or of measuring others by ourselves. Men are often better than their creeds. It

may be that we could not subsist upon the scanty measure of scriptural food to which some men limit themselves, nor breathe so rarefied an air as others do; but that is no proof that they are without spiritual life. The oak must have his roots imbedded in a deep soil; but there are plants that live and flourish without being rooted in the soil at all. There is an orthodoxy of the spirit, and there is an orthodoxy of the letter. They should go together, if possible; but if they are divided, and one is obliged to make a selection, we say, without a moment's hesitation, give us the orthodoxy of the spirit. Some of the worst bigots in the world have held a correct creed, and some with a very vague creed have appeared to have an unusual measure of Christ-like charity.

There are three subjects quite distinct, and yet closely allied to one another: Revelation, Inspiration, and Canonicity. The distinction between the first two must hold us a moment. These two differ in their nature. Revelation is knowledge communicated by God, which man's unaided powers could never attain to. Inspiration is that operation of the Holy Ghost by which those who are the subjects of it have been enabled to transmit to their fellow men certain facts and doctrines revealed, or otherwise, without error or false statement. These two differ as to their object. "The object of Revelation is to communicate knowledge, the object of Inspiration is to secure infallibility in teaching." They differ in their effects. "The effect of Revelation is to make the recipient wiser, the effect of Inspiration is to preserve him from error in teaching." One receives, the other transmits. Some have argued, as Dr. Lee and Dr. Pope, that these two are to be distinguished because they

come from two distinct sources—Revelation being the peculiar function of the Lord Jesus, Inspiration the result of the agency of the Holy Spirit, though Paul says that God revealed His Son in him, when, of course, he means God the Father; and he says again, speaking of certain spiritual mysteries which the natural man could not know, "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." These two gifts, however, are so distinct that they did exist the one without the other. Yet it is perfectly true, they often meet in one and the same individual. For instance, a revelation is vouchsafed to a prophet, and the same prophet is inspired to write it or to deliver it by word of mouth. There is no instance of one prophet receiving a revelation and another prophet being inspired to transmit it. Indeed, that could not be. In the language of sacred science, then, Inspiration and Revelation are two distinct processes; but in popular language this distinction is lost sight of. Indeed, the Bible does not always keep in mind this distinction, but uses these two words interchangeably. The very word "inspiration" suggests the inbreathing of something. This word occurs only twice in the Scriptures; once in 2 Tim. iii. 16. The other passage is, "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." This is certainly an inspiration of nothing less than our intellectual faculties and powers. Though the word "inspiration" is found but twice in the Scriptures, there is something referred to which the word represents, and which gives a freer idea of the thing we call inspiration. We speak in common parlance of the inspiration of the artist and the poet and the orator, and the Bible lends some countenance to this usage. As

artists, Bezaleel and Aholiah, and others, were in a sense inspired to do the work of the tabernacle: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass," etc. We read again how the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson, and the same thing is said of Othniel; and upon Gideon, and upon Jephthah, and upon Saul, and others, the Spirit is said to have come. Of course, this is inspiration in a secondary sense. But to return; the distinction between Revelation and Inspiration is obvious enough if we will examine the sacred record. There were things revealed that were not written, because it was sufficient that they were spoken. We can hardly imagine that the children of God before the flood had not more spiritual food than we have mention made of—in the brief history of those times. The prophets also delivered most of their messages *viva voce*, and never committed them to writing at all. In fact, out of evidently a great multitude of prophets which, generation after generation, filled the prophetic schools, only sixteen were directed to write. We have no document from the pen of Elijah and Elisha, two of the greatest of the order. Of the apostles, we have only two or three outlines of discourses. As to our Lord, of Whom it was said, "Full of grace are Thy lips," and Whose conversation was always inspired by the Spirit with which He was anointed; He Who declared that every idle word that men should speak they should give account thereof in the day of judgment,

could hardly have spoken idle words, or how should He judge those that did? Of Him St. John writes, that beside those put on the enduring record, "there were many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written"; and no doubt the same held good of His words as of His deeds. About thirty of these stray sayings, not in the Gospels, have been preserved, as it is believed. There was much revealed then that was not written, and there was much written that was not revealed. All knowledge in the Bible that came to its writers in an ordinary way needed not to be revealed. Its histories were some of them written by eye-witnesses, while others were evidently compiled. Luke tells you distinctly that he compiled his Gospel from the mouths of them who had been "eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word." It is generally believed that Moses compiled the Book of Genesis from existing records, or from tradition. And, moreover, there is much in the Bible of which God is not the Author. It is His word in this sense that He directed what should be written, and, as we believe, superintended the writing; but neither the thought nor the word is of His suggestion or dictation. In evidence of this, we have in the Bible the speeches of Satan on more than one occasion. There is his speech to our first mother, his slander against Job, and the words he used when he tempted our Lord in the wilderness. Now, Satan's words were not put into his lips by God. That would make God the author of sin, and Satan His messenger. No; but God directed these first words of the father of lies to be recorded, because,

the Bible being the history of our Redemption, some account of the introduction of sin into the world is almost a necessary part of such a history. The same may be said of that symposium held between Job and his three friends, when the ever-recurring question is debated, Why are the good made to suffer? That discussion is not finally concluded yet. Well, now, in the arguments adduced, and they fill two-thirds of the book, there are plenty of fallacies and a few falsehoods uttered, so that God in the end rebuked them, and told them they had not spoken of Him the thing that was right, and directed them to offer sacrifices by way of atoning for their folly. In fact, the Bible writers are moved by the Holy Ghost to record a multitude of sayings and doings of which God did not approve. They were written for our admonition; and, moreover, we have here all manner of rare and curious things: family genealogies, government dispatches, camp orders, army returns, and marching itineraries. We have speeches from Cain, Lamech, Laban, Esau; from foreigners, as Benhadad the King of Syria, Rabshakeh, Pilate the Roman Governor, Demetrius, the Recorder of Ephesus, Tertullus the Orator, and the letter of Captain Lysias to Felix; quotations from heathen poets and unknown Jewish traditions. Now, clearly these are in no sense revelations. They cannot claim God for their author: and yet, as the history would be incomplete without them, the Holy Spirit moved holy men to write them down in that wonderful book designed for the education of the race; and inasmuch as God directed this collection of facts, dating from the garden of Eden, to be put on record, the book that contains them all is called God's Book, just as I might

direct a number of men to collect a book of facts for me, and after I satisfied myself as to the contents of the book, I endorse it with my name, it becomes known as my book. And now, just as there is a distinction to be borne in mind between Revelation and Inspiration, so there is a distinction never to be lost sight of between those extraordinary operations of the Spirit which produced the Holy Scriptures, and those ordinary operations of the Spirit resulting in the conversion of the soul and that life of holiness which ought to follow. These two have been confounded, and that, too, by writers of distinction. There is a private revelation to the soul of the individual believer. Such a revelation was made to Peter when he uttered his noble confession that Christ was the Son of the living God, a confession that called forth the remarkable words of our Lord: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Yes, there must be a personal revelation of Christ, and the things of Christ, which no book can give, no human teacher impart.

> "No man can truly say
> That Jesus is the Lord,
> Unless Thou take the veil away,
> And breathe the living word."

"No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." In order to conversion, there is a series of revelations necessary: a revelation of sin, one's own sin, producing repentance that is unto life; a revelation of Christ in His atoning office; a revelation of pardon and adoption, when the Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are the children of God. It was for

the Spirit of wisdom and revelation that Paul prayed on behalf of the individual members of the Church at Ephesus. But still, there is a clear distinction, not merely in degree but in kind, between the operations of the Spirit upon the minds of the Bible writers and the operations of the Spirit upon the minds of holy men and women to-day. One is to answer a private, and the other to serve a public, purpose; one is to make men good, the other is to make them infallible teachers. Goodness does not make men infallible. The opinions of the holiest of men and women could not be built up into a system of Christian doctrine, because their opinions are so divergent. Good men in these times have no commission to write Scripture, nor have they the inspiration needful to do it. Some have pretended to it, but there was nothing to substantiate the claim in the judgment of either the Church or the world. The word "inspiration" is used, in what we have called a popular sense, some three or four times in the Book of Common Prayer. Mr. Wesley uses it in the same way, as descriptive of the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit, and says he does so because he regards the word "influence," which means flowing in, as a stronger term. But Wesley would deny in the most emphatic manner that the inspiration of which he speaks gives men in our day authority to speak on behalf of God as the apostles and prophets did; and this is unquestionably right. There is an operation of the Spirit to-day, for all purposes of practical and experimental holiness, as effective and as mighty as was ever yet experienced by man; for God never yet bestowed a richer, fuller measure of sanctifying grace upon a single individual than He is willing to

bestow on any one of us. He is as rich in grace as ever, and with Him there is no respect of persons. There is no objection to these freer uses of the word "inspiration"; still, the stricter employment of the term should never be forgotten, especially when one sees so clearly that scores of objections to the Bible arise solely from the objector's ignorance of the distinction between what God directed men to put on record, and what God Himself put it into men's minds and hearts to write. There is a wide difference between authorship and reporting. If Coleridge had kept this in view, he could not have raved as he did, in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, about "orthodox liars for God." The theory of inspiration that he combats is a man of straw that he sets up for the pleasure of knocking down. He burns with hottest indignation against Deborah, because she blessed Jael for treachery to Sisera. It was what Dr. Farrar calls a cold-blooded murder. Perhaps, we feel the baseness of the act as much as either of the gentlemen named; but why blame the writer of Judges, whoever he may be? why utter tirades against the doctrine of Inspiration? Truly the Bible records the song, but it sounds no note of approval. Deborah may have been animated by a wrong spirit; but to transmit her poetry, blazing and abrupt as it is, like the jagged edges of the lightning, surely does not involve the historian in complicity with the authoress. English historians narrate the violence of former ages. They tell of the martyrdom of our Protestant forefathers, they recount crimes as diabolic as man could perpetrate; but surely the historian is not to be judged a partaker in these cruelties because he has put them upon record? Once more we say,

the Bible abounds with sayings and doings to which God never affixed the seal of His approbation.

The third subject to which we referred was Canonicity; but of that it is not possible to treat in the space allowed. We may touch upon it hereafter.

Up to this time we have assumed the inspiration of the Bible. It is time we offered some proof of this. The existence of the book we call the Bible cannot be disputed. How comes it here? We demand that it be adequately accounted for. The philosophy of induction is that every effect must have a cause; and the object of all research is to find out causes. If ever you are brought into conflict with a sceptic—no matter how learned he may be—transfix him on this point, the Bible has to be accounted for, adequately accounted for. Should he declare himself an agnostic—that is, a know-nothing—then exact of him a pledge that he keeps silence. Not knowing, he puts himself out of court; he has no right to contradict. He says he does not know. Impress it on him that because he does not know, he must not assume that all men are like himself. Should he adopt another course, and propose some such baseless theory as has been hitherto proposed, it will be instructive to see to what shifts and subterfuges infidelity in her extremity is driven, and the conviction will grow strong that it takes ten times more credulity to be a sceptic than it does to be a believer. One thing is certain, infidelity has never yet accounted for the Bible, and the effects it has produced. Up to the present, no theory has been propounded worthy of serious consideration. The mythical theory never did hold water. A myth is something unreal, intangible, and unsubstantial as a dream.

The Christian religion is a colossal fact, one of the mightiest forces in existence to-day. A myth! Why, according to Wieseler, Paul the apostle, the ablest exponent and the most successful champion of the Christian faith, was converted within seven years of the death of the Founder of this religion, and all his epistles were written within twenty-seven years after his conversion. Now, twenty-seven years is too short a time for a myth to grow; at any rate, to grow to the dimensions of the Christian Church in the year 65 after the birth of its Founder. The legendary theory was more short-lived than the one just named. The tendency theory of Baur grew rapidly at first; but because it had no deepness of earth, no sooner was the sun risen with a burning heat than it withered away. Lately, the plan of battle and the point of attack have been changed. The attempt to overthrow the authorship of the Fourth Gospel resulted in such an utter failure that the forces of the antagonists have been withdrawn from the strongholds of the New Testament, and the assault has been concentrated upon the Pentateuch. The latest phase of destructive criticism is that suggested by Wellhausen. According to this hypothesis, the Pentateuch is made up of contributions from four different authors: one of whom lived in the time of Uzziah, King of Judah, who was contemporary with Isaiah the prophet; another, in the time of Josiah; a third, after the return from the Babylonian Captivity. The writings of these three were blended together by a skilful editor, who wrote them up into a kind of romance, in which art concealed successfully the date of the composition. Now, this is not a little startling. We are told

with outspoken boldness that the laws and religious ceremonies and social economy of the Jews, which everybody up till now believed were introduced at the beginning of their national existence, just after the people were delivered from the bondage of Egypt, were, after all, never inaugurated till the return of a remnant of the nation from Babylon; that, in fact, Moses (if there ever was such a person) scarcely wrote a line of them, but some one else, about a thousand years after Moses was supposed to have lived, by what some have called the inspiration of impersonation — that is, the inspiration vouchsafed to forgers — composed these books, and palmed them upon the credulous people as documents composed some ten centuries before. Now, let us imagine an individual who undertakes to prove that Magna Charta was a measure passed by the last Liberal Government, when in office, what would be thought of him? Would not his dearest friends conclude he was demented? What! it would be said, why, that Charter is the germ from out of which the British Constitution has developed. It is the foundation of our national liberties. Acts of Parliament refer to it; judges have decided important cases on its authority; speakers in our Houses of Legislature have quoted it; a hundred English historians have written about it. There is an island in the Thames, between Windsor and Staines, still pointed out as the spot where King John signed it. How is it possible to prove that this national well-known document came into existence six hundred and fifty years after the real date? Well now, the task of proving that the Pentateuch lies not at the beginning of Jewish history, but some nine hundred years after, is a task quite as hope-

less as the one imagined. Tell this to any intelligent working man in the three kingdoms who loves his Bible, and a happy smile will overspread his face, and he will clap his hands with gladness, and exclaim, "Is that the latest outcome of what is called the Higher Criticism? Then, thank God, my Bible is safe."

Is the question still pressed, Why do we claim for the Bible a supernatural origin? The answer is, Because the natural powers of the human mind were not competent to produce it. It is not a theory, but a fact, that "the world by wisdom knew not God." Early in the history of religious thought the matter was propounded, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" and the answer was, "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." For a hundred generations some of the mightiest intellects God ever made have taxed their powers to the uttermost to solve the problem of the nature, unity, and personality of God; and they completely failed. Nay, they made no perceptible advance towards its solution; and if during all these long-drawn ages no approximation was made, are we not justified in coming to the conclusion that the subject is beyond our reach? Nay, even the traditions man once held in his possession have slipped through his fingers; for just as a mass of ruins, moss-grown and mouldering, shows no sign of a power to arrest decay, much less to set about repair and reconstruction, so human nature, left to itself, has ever shown an unmistakable tendency to become more and more delapsed, and more and more degenerate. In truth, man has no faculties adequate to such a task. Our senses, which tell us all we know of

material things, can tell us nothing about things spiritual. Faith without a revelation is out of the question. Faith without a revelation is like that dove sent forth from Noah's ark, which spread its weary wings over the troubled waters till it fainted from exhaustion, without finding a spot whereon to rest its feet. Our intuitions—our "Intuitional Consciousness," of which the late J. D. Morell, echoing Schleiermacher, wrote so eloquently and fallaciously in his *Philosophy of Religion* — cannot come into the account. This intuitional consciousness, by which man gets to know his Maker, cannot be the common heritage of the race, else why do we discover no evidence of its existence save among the descendants of Abraham? Reason is clearly insufficient. If reason can find out God, why has she not done so? Nay, reason, with the revelation in her hands, comes to opposite conclusions respecting some of the great verities of the faith, as the two strongly contrasted theologies of Calvin and Arminius sufficiently demonstrate; and as soon as reason leaves the written Word, and attempts to deal with such questions as the absolute and the unconditioned, she steps from the solid rock upon a cloud, and our helpless logic lands us in all sorts of complications and contradictions.

The phenomenon to be explained and accounted for is this: How was it that a small community of rustics—chiefly farmers and shepherds, living in Palestine, a country about the size of Wales—how was it that they came into possession of a secret which all the rest of the world was and is not able to discover? *Is* not able to discover. Could we of the present age, and that after eighteen hundred years of Christian culture, could we write another Book of Psalms

or an epistle like those written by St. Paul? We could not imitate them with any measure of success. Is there a man in England to-day that could antedate the eclipse of our national greatness almost to a month, as Daniel foretold the overthrow of his country, both as to Church and State, when the abomination of desolation was set up, and Jerusalem was left a pile of ruins? Is there a man on earth to-day who could cast the horoscope of existing nations, and tell us what will be the condition of France and Germany, and Turkey and Russia, and the States of America, for a hundred and fifty years to come, as Isaiah predicted the destiny of the nations by which he was surrounded in his time? We said, *was* not able to discover. Take the Bible doctrine of God, and could any nation of antiquity have told us what the Bible tells us of the Infinite, the All-Perfect, the Supreme? Could Greece, when in the fulness of her intellectual power, have given to mankind any such a notion? Read her grotesque mythology, and find the answer there. Could Egypt, who taught Greece her alphabet; Egypt, who carved the Sphinx and built the Pyramids? Acquaint yourself with her debasing fetish-worship, and the reply will be, "Impossible." Could India, with her ancient civilisation and her ponderous literature? Study the *Rig Veda*, the book which, above all others, her sages regard as most sacred, and the nature-worship dominant there will stand out in striking contrast with the scriptural worship of Jehovah. Could China—China with a history running back to a period as near to the great Deluge as we are to the Norman Conquest? Ask Confucius, the founder of her State religion, and he will answer that he knows not even the name for a personal

Divinity, and that the spirit-world is a subject about which he has a strong disinclination to converse. Again the interrogation is repeated: How was it that those Hebrew peasants, with their lowly civilisation, almost destitute as they were of art and learning, and science and philosophy, cut off to a great extent from the outer world, the great sea on one side, the desert on the other, the deep fosse of the Jordan on the third, and the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon on the fourth, with Hollow Syria as the only door of entrance: how was it that these people, descendants of idolaters, schooled in fetish-loving Egypt, surrounded on every side, and dwelling long in the very midst of a sanguinary and lustful heathenism: how was it that they stood out religiously in boldest contrast to all other nations, the sole possessors of this Divine wisdom: and that after the lapse of forty centuries they are still the religious educators of mankind, having given to the world a faith destined, as it appears, to triumph over all other beliefs, and to flourish as long as the sun and moon endure. How is it? Ah! there is but one answer. They knew God, because God revealed Himself to *them*, while He left all other nations to walk in their own ways. This is their own explanation of the marvel; and in the absence of any other, we are compelled to accept it. A thousand miracles, no matter how stupendous, could not more fully demonstrate the presence of the supernatural; and the wonder is how any rational being can evade this conclusion.

CHAPTER II.

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION GATHERED FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

After these preliminary observations, our next business is to interrogate the book itself, in order to ascertain what is the testimony it bears to its supernatural origin. And here, the moment we open it, upon the first page in this first chapter, there is abundant evidence that though man wrote it, he was inspired of God to do so. Either this first chapter is a revelation or a fable. If true at all, the matter is of such a nature as to make it impossible that it should have come from any other source than the "Father of lights"; for it narrates events that happened before the first man had opened his eyes upon the light, and therefore it lies altogether beyond the sphere of human experience or observation. And the manner, as well as the matter, is unique. In the Bible itself there is nothing more majestic and sublime. It has won the admiration of men of taste and culture, from the pagan Longinus to the present day. It is to the temple of sacred truth what the Propylæa was to the Acropolis. There is nothing of the fanciful childishness of the myth about it. It moves in an air of reality. It has all the attributes of genuine history. It would be difficult in the literature of the world to select a passage in which so much thought is expressed in as few simple words as in the third verse of

this first chapter. We cannot ascertain how or to whom this revelation was vouchsafed. It has all the appearance of a translated vision. The description is optical. As Mr. Ruskin has said, the author is more of a painter than anything else. The whole is represented as one might have seen it, and that in popular language rather than in the language of science. The days are more like chapters into which an author might divide his book, or acts into which one divides a play, than definite periods of time. As to how light existed before the sun, the nebular hypothesis conceived by Kant and elaborated by La Place is thought by some high authorities to supply an explanation; but it is not wise to risk the interpretation of Scripture upon any scientific theory. The most scientific feature in this account is the order in which it is said the different things were created—grass, herbs, trees. First the vegetable, then the water animal, the reptiles, and the birds; then land animals; and, lastly, man. This is in keeping with the findings of geology. There is as much agreement between science and revelation as can be fairly expected. According to the declarations of many of those best able to judge, there is no contradiction between geology and Genesis. As to the attempts at what is called reconciliation, they are premature and abortive. The evidence is not yet complete, nor anything like complete. If scientists and theologians would mutually agree to say nothing more about reconciliation for a thousand years to come, no doubt both parties by that time would be better prepared to compare notes and draw conclusions. In the present state of scientific knowledge and Biblical criticism, the attempt is absurd. There is a want of agreement among

the interpreters of the Word, and Science is still collecting data; and these, as they accumulate upon her hands, in the nature of things must modify her conclusions. It is impossible to say when the great harvest of facts will be gathered in. There is no finality about human knowledge. It is a matter of deep regret that there should be any feeling of antagonism between the interpreters of God's Word and the investigators of His works, because that is prejudicial to both. The thing desired is, that the promoters of sacred science and the promoters of physical science should co-operate with godly jealousy to further the interests of truth. *Lux Mundi* is right: "The best minds of the future are to be neither religious minds defying scientific advance, nor scientific minds denying religion, but minds in which religion interprets and is interpreted by science, in which faith and inquiry subsist together and reinforce one another." To whom the information contained in the first part of Genesis was first imparted, we of to-day have no means of knowing. Perhaps to Adam, perhaps to one of his immediate descendants. It might have been handed down to Moses as a tradition, which would be almost the same as that of an eye-witness; for the life of man being then so much longer than ours, tradition in those times would be very different from what tradition is with us. Lamech, the father of Noah, was for sixty years a contemporary of Adam; and Shem, the son of Noah, was for ninety-five years contemporary with Lamech, and Shem lived twenty-four years a contemporary of Abraham, so that Shem may have told the father of the faithful things his grandfather Lamech reported to him as having fallen from the lips of Adam; or it may have come

into the hands of Moses in the form of a written document, a remnant, perhaps, of an earlier Bible that floated with Noah in the ark; and, moreover, these documents from which Moses is supposed to have compiled Genesis may have been written under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and therefore inspired. It is not improbable that the art of writing was known before the flood. It is certain the arts and sciences had made considerable progress in those early times. If the creation record came to Moses as a writing, one feels anxious to know in what language it was written. It is hardly likely it was Hebrew, and if not, then these early documents were translated into Hebrew. That the art of writing was practised very early, appears from the fact that the oldest manuscript as yet found in Egypt is said to be of the age of Cheops, 2300 B.C. There is another containing the moral essays of Ptah-heft, a prince, and this is of the date of 2200 B.C. Histories and novels have been discovered written when Israel was dwelling in the land of Ham. It is not conjecture that Moses quoted from a book called *The Book of the Wars of Jehovah;* and in Joshua and the Second of Samuel there are citations from *The Book of Jasher.* We have also writings on bricks and stone, in Babylonia and Nineveh, reaching back to the times anterior to Abraham. The creation story of Moses obtains a certain kind of support from the Chaldæan Genesis, as it has been called. Both accounts seem to have come from the same source; but the Chaldæan version is evidently corrupted by early polytheism. The other inspired writers refer to it both in the New Testament and the Old. Our Lord refers to it twice, and quotes and argues from it as from genuine

history. As far, therefore, as the Mosaic account of creation admits of proof, it is corroborated by other portions of Scripture, as a witness within; and as far as the outside testimony is concerned, it is all for, and nothing against. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about this oldest record is, as Dr. Candlish observes, that it is "so constructed and so recorded that it shall not anticipate human discoveries, and yet shall be in entire harmony with them, as in the course of time they emerge. Only one seeing the end from the beginning could so adjust the language used as, on the one hand, to make it tell the men of the existing generations no more than they otherwise knew of astronomical or geological or other natural truth; and yet, on the other hand, to make it such that the men of all future generations should be able, in the long run and without violence, to explain it satisfactorily in the light of their clearer and fuller information, and their more advanced and accurate science." And it is so. Had Moses described the creation of the world in the scientific language of the nineteenth century, no one would have understood its meaning previous to the nineteenth century, and all generations succeeding the present century would have said it was out of date; for a standard work in many of the sciences is reckoned out of date in ten years, not because the advancement of science is so rapid, but because the teaching of science is perpetually changing: but as it is, the account in Genesis is abreast of every age. It keeps pace alike with the ignorant and the most intelligent. But although the first chapter in the Bible is not at variance with science, and though it seems a necessary preface to all the after-coming history, and without it the

Bible would seem to be very incomplete, yet its historical and scientific information is of very small account compared with some other matters recorded here. We have postulated, in this first verse, the greatest and, in a religious point of view, the most essential of all facts, the Existence, Unity, and Personality of God. There is more wisdom in this opening sentence than in all the writings in the world outside the Bible. The truth embodied here, fully believed and understood, would convert mankind from infidelity, superstition, and idolatry in an hour. Man started on his career with the holiest of all knowledge in his possession, and some branch or branches of the human household have retained possession ever since. God has never left Himself without a witness, and He never will. The knowledge which He first imparted has been growing ever since, and it will spread and increase till "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." Now, this is suggestive. As man knew God, to begin with, he was not a savage; and if indeed he is the offspring of the old world monkey, as he is thought by some to be, as soon as he, the progeny of the ape, had mental capacity sufficient to grasp the idea of the Infinite, he was made at once by the holding of this idea to differ from his parents in the true scale of beings, more than his parents after countless ages of evolution differed from the lowest form of animal existence, however low that lowest living thing might be. Are these things so? Did man in the beginning know God—know Him as one, not many? Then one-Godism was the earliest creed, and this article of belief was handed down from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to succeeding generations, till, as

the heirloom of humanity, it has reached even unto us. This is another germ truth. Writers on the philosophy of religion, as they call their speculations, some of them argue that the highest form of spiritual religion known on earth to-day is but a development of the lowest fetishism. This notion is banned by Scripture and reason. The Bible asserts that monotheism was the first form of religious belief. Now, if it can be proved that all the forms of ancient religion known to history were but degenerate forms of a primitive theism—if, from outside and independent sources, this can be established, then this will be a powerful confirmation of the Mosaic record; and we say, to prove it is true is to prove it is inspired. Turn we then to the world's grey dawn, while yet the shadows linger in the valleys, and the mists have scarcely risen from the plains, so that the perspective is defective, and all things are somewhat out of proportion. Egypt shall be the first place visited. Renan used to say he never thought of Egypt but he felt dizzy. Egypt was the queen and mother of kingdoms. In a religious sense, she was the basest of nations. Visit her about the time that Solomon was dedicating the temple he had erected to the worship of the great I AM, and there is a famine of corn in the land, and the people elect to die of starvation rather than eat the leeks and onions—the vegetable deities growing in their gardens; or may be the whole nation is in mourning because Apis, the white-bull-god, has died of overfeeding. But visit Egypt some centuries earlier, and the religious condition of the people will be very different. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, and no higher authority could be quoted, tells us, "The fundamental doctrine was the unity of the Deity,

but this unity was not represented; but the attributes of His Being were represented under positive forms, and hence arose the multiplicity of gods that engendered idolatry"; and, finally, the worship of the Egyptians degenerated into one of the grossest forms of nature-worship. To the same effect writes Mr. Cooper, honorary secretary of the Society of Biblical Archæology: "First of all the supreme deity of the Egyptians was Ammon Ra, the spiritual author of all existence, physical, moral, and everything else." It is true that, at the earliest period of which we have any record, the "gods" are spoken of, but they are subordinate beings, not higher in position than the angels of the Old Testament. Ra is the supreme; he is addressed as, "Lord of Eternity, Maker Everlasting." There are three lines of a hymn, translated by Mr. Goodwin, in which he is praised as—

> "Chief Creator of the whole earth,
> Supporter of affairs above every god,
> In whose goodness the gods rejoice."

Abundance of similar evidence might be gleaned from numerous authors. Cudworth, to wit, in his *Intellectual System of the Universe*, sets himself, with all his Herculean prowess and boundless wealth of learning, to demonstrate that, back of all the systems of pagan religions, there lies the doctrine of one Supreme Divinity. China, with the exception of Japan the oldest kingdom upon earth, and no civilised people have less religion, yet, according to the testimony of Gutzlaff, Meredith, and Legge, China in the earliest times possessed some knowledge of the Supreme Ruler of earth and heaven. Dr. Legge, to whose authority all who know his perfect mastery of all things pertaining to China and the Chinese will do homage, writes: "The

Chinese fathers knew God as the Supreme Ruler, Whose providence embraced all. T'ien has much the force of the name Jehovah, as God Himself explained it to Moses. Tî represented that absolute Being in the relation to man of their Lord and Governor. Tî was to the Chinese fathers, I believe, exactly what God was to our fathers, whenever they took that great name upon their lips." In India, there are gods many and lords many; but there is one above all, supreme. Brahma is first, without a second. He is the absolute, the eternal. Max Müller, in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, tells us of a Hindu in Benares who gave a lecture to a mixed audience of English and Hindus, and, in the course of his address, told the people, "We really lament the ignorance of those who charge us with polytheism in the teeth of thousands of texts in our Purânas declaring, in clear and unmistakable terms, that there is but one God; who manifests Himself as Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, in His functions of Creator, Protector, and Destroyer." This doctrine is put in a striking light by an Indian poet, whose words have been translated into the following English verse:—

> "In these three persons
> The one true God was shown—
> Each first in place,
> Each last—but one alone,
> Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma,
> Each may be
> First, second, third,
> Among the blessed three."

Among the ancient Persians, who, like the Hindus and ourselves, were descendants of Japheth, a high authority assures us he finds the same truth taught by Zoroaster,

whose doctrine, he says, was "distinctly and essentially monotheistic." Indeed, the partial glimpses we get of the old world and its manner of thinking reveal to us, in certain curious ways, this old-world theism. Abraham, in a land of idolaters, attains to the knowledge of the one true and living God. He came into the land of Canaan, and here he finds a co-religionist in the person of Melchizedek, a priest of the one God Whom he knew by the name of El Elion—the Most High, the very same title the Phœnicians gave the deity they worshipped, doubtless attaching to this title the same meaning as the King of Salem did. If so, this would suggest a widespread monotheism, for the Phœnicians were the Anglo-Saxons of the old world, and had numerous colonies along the shores of the Mediterranean. At Gerar, Abraham found another king who had some knowledge of the one Lord and God: and about a hundred years after, Isaac found another king of the same name in the same place, and he seems to have been similarly enlightened. Balaam, too, stood far enough outside the pale of the Jewish Church. He came from Aram "out of the mountains of the East." He is styled a prophet. He possessed the gift of inspiration. He knew the one God, the God Whom Israel worshipped; and we cannot suppose that he was the only person residing in that country by whom that knowledge was possessed. And now to come to the present time. It has been frequently declared by those who ought to know, that there is not a tribe of human beings in the world who have not some idea of a Divine Being, and some notion of religion. Now, these are a few facts gleaned from a wide field, and they all point in one direction. Look where

we will into the earliest records of nations, a somewhat definite monotheism is discernible, lurking in the background. All this goes to prove that the earliest religious belief of man was the belief that there was one God, and one God only; and this powerfully corroborates the first chapter of Genesis, in which the self-same fact is so clearly asserted. The moral condition of heathendom to-day bears witness to a terrible backsliding, an awful apostasy; and this seems to establish these two points, that without a written revelation the spiritual life is sure to degenerate, and that if religion sink into decay, morality will not long survive it.

This early and ancient record asserts also an important scientific fact, that only one pair of human beings was at first created, and consequently from this pair all mankind have been derived. What has science to say to this? Does she assert the unity of the race? Because, if so, she affords a powerful support to the teaching of Scripture, and therefore bears testimony to its inspiration. Now it would be overstepping the truth to say there was unanimity among the authorities upon this point; but it is quite within the truth to state that the greater weight of authority is on the side of the unity of the race. Dr. Pritchard, the father of English Ethnology, is very decided about the matter; and in this he is supported by Blumenbach and Cuvier, Humboldt and Quatrefages, and Laurence. Mr. Darwin also very strongly inclines in that direction. Colour is almost the only objection to be overcome, and Darwin attempts to account for the blackness of the negro by natural causes; while he directs attention to the fact that the infants of the most dissimilar races are much

more alike than the adults; that the new-born negro child is not black, but a reddish nut-brown, the eyes very blue, and the hair curled only at the ends. Setting aside colour, we meet everywhere the same anatomical structure, especially as to skull and brain; the same intellectual capacity, duration of life, liability to the same diseases, the same temperature of the blood, the same normal frequency of pulse, the same fertility through intermarriage. Now, if every bone and muscle, if every nerve and fibre, of man's body—if all the faculties and powers and susceptibilities of his soul are all the world over the same—if everywhere he shows the same religious capacity—it is the height of absurdity to endeavour to found a distinction of species upon the colour of the skin or the frizzing of the hair. Take the fairest Circassian obtainable, and the blackest negro that was ever reared on the Dark Continent, put one at one end and the other at the other of a cord of a given length, and it would be easy to fill up all the space between with shades of colour so imperceptible that the keenest observer would find it impossible to tell where the blacks left off and where the whites began. God, then, has made of one blood all nations of men. For thousands of years, science did not know this. Gradually and slowly she has come to apprehend it, and yet here stands the fact, written as in letters of light upon the first page of the Bible. What stronger evidence could be adduced of the accuracy of the writer of Genesis; and if the first chapter of Genesis is true, it must be inspired.

These primitive records contain another matter of vital importance, the history of the fall of man. This one fact, indeed, contains a cluster of facts. First, as a prominent

actor there is the tempter, and that tempter is a person. And this agrees with common sense and philosophy—two things not always in harmony. Moral evil must reside in a person, for the obvious reason that things are not responsible, and moral qualities cannot reside in them. Then there is here the free agency of man set forth distinctly. There is not a word about fate and the sport of the gods, or any outward or inward necessity of any kind. Sin is here, as everywhere, the voluntary transgression of the law. As far as man is concerned, this is the origin of evil. No other account of the mystery of iniquity has ever been suggested in any measure so natural, so convincing. Two things are indisputable. Sin is in the world, and God is not its author. An appeal to universal consciousness settles the first, and the exercise of our rational understanding will establish the second. In addition to all this internal evidence, there is a considerable amount of outside and independent confirmation of the history of the fall. Traditions of man's first disobedience, and of the serpent, and of man's original blest abode, fill the background of his earliest history. They are found in all parts of the world. They appear and reappear in a great variety of forms, and with great diversity of colouring. The idea of a golden age, an age of felicity and innocence, when the gods dwelt on earth and lived in daily intercourse with man, fills to a large extent the field of old-world vision. Like a gorgeous sunset, it tinged with its fading splendours all things in heaven above and earth beneath. It would occupy a large space to recount all that might be said about serpent myths and serpent worship. Among the Egyptians the

symbol of the evil one was a serpent, and they held the belief that the contest between good and evil would some day terminate, because there would be an incarnation of the Deity; and in this condition of incarnation He would overcome and utterly destroy the author of sin. In some parts of India, serpents are sacred. The existence of this serpent lore may be discovered among the earliest emigrants to the gloomy stormy north. It formed a prominent feature in the theology of the British Druids. Now, that these notions obtained among people so far apart, and that they agree so minutely in so many circumstantials, can only be accounted for upon the supposition that they were the common heritage of the human family, before the original household was broken up, and the wandering of the nations began. And as infallibly as every ray of light points to the centre of illumination, so all these scattered rays of tradition point to one primeval source.

Nor is this all. There is something of still profounder interest to be found in those ancient records. The greatest event that has ever happened since the creation is foreshadowed here, for here we have the prophecy and promise of Redemption. This is the turning back of the first fold of that mystery of God's self-manifestation as the God of Grace, the God of Israel, the Saviour. This is the theme of which all the rest of the Bible is but the elucidation and expansion. Of this, God spake at sundry times and in divers manners by the prophets; this was adumbrated by type and symbol, and written law, and speaking rites, until at last we have the perfect revelation of God in Christ. This prospective redemption looks back upon at least three points already touched upon. It looks

back upon creation, and springs out of it; for it was creative love that gave birth to redeeming love. It looks back upon the apostasy of man, and finds its *raison d'être* in that disastrous event. It directly implies the unity of the race. The headship and federal relations of the two Adams to the rest of mankind could have no existence unless this fact is accepted. The brotherhood of man, and the universal redemption which is in Jesus, are bound up with this doctrine as social ethics and Scripture dogma. There is no conclusion of Paul's inspired logic that is more convincing, more consoling, more inspiriting than this—"As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." These two things, sin and salvation, are the body and soul of the Christian religion.

But the first few verses of the Bible are not exhausted yet. To us English, and indeed to all Christianised people, there is an institution dating back to the commencement of human history, the institution of marriage—marriage between one man and one woman. The fact that one pair only was created, the fact that to this hour the women born into the world are about the same in number as the men, is proof positive that God intended this, to say nothing of the social and moral considerations. Out of this institution springs another, the family; and out of the family springs the nation; and what the family is the nation will ever be. The holiest spot on earth is home. There are virtues nourished here that can grow nowhere else. Marriage, be it remembered, was instituted in the time of man's innocency. It is a relic of Paradise itself.

But marriage is not the only relic of man's unsinning state. There is another, the blessed and holy Sabbath. This is an ordinance of a festive and religious character. The Sabbath is hallowed by the holiest associations, and these are very significant. It is the festival of creation. It seems it was the day on which the deliverance of the chosen people out of Egypt was effected. It was the day when Jesus rose from the dead, and the day on which the Spirit was poured out from on high; and, consequently, the birthday of the Christian Dispensation. Just what the Lord's Supper is to the great event of the Atonement, just as the Passover was instituted as a perpetual memorial of the redemption from Egyptian bondage, so the sacrament of the Sabbath was instituted as an everlasting memento of the creation, but chiefly of the creation of man. The Law is old, but the Sabbath was before the Law. There are distinct references to it at the time of the flood, and earlier. It was one of the signs of the Covenant, and witnessed to the fact of a creating personal God. Now, it is a matter of congratulation, while it is very remarkable, that here again we have outside and independent witnesses attesting the historical veracity of Genesis. Some while ago, certain writings were discovered in Chaldæa, dating back, it is believed, two thousand years before the angels announced the birth of the wonderful Babe to the shepherds of Bethlehem, that is, some five hundred years before another babe was found in a basket of bulrushes among the flags that grew upon the banks of the Nile; and this old terra-cotta document—that cannot be bribed, and is happily so explicit that it cannot be misunderstood—distinctly states that the seventh day should be held sacred as a day of rest.

Mr. Johnson, in his book called *The Primitive Sabbath*, affirms that the Sabbath was known in China at a period of such remote antiquity as to make it impossible to fix the date. Nothing is more certain than that it was known to our pagan Anglo-Saxon forefathers. Sunday, the name we give the seventh day, verifies that. Much more might be added, but surely this array of facts is sufficient to take the earlier portions of the Bible out of the region of myths and fables, and to stamp it with the seal of literal and authentic history. As has been previously observed, the Pentateuch is the point about which the assailants are doing fiercest battle; and of all parts of the Pentateuch, Genesis is selected as the chief point of attack. To establish the historical integrity of Genesis, therefore, is to push the battle to the gates of the enemy.

We come next to the record of the Deluge. Here, again, the chief outside witness is tradition, and it is to be remembered that there is true tradition just as certainly as there is true history. All history was tradition to begin with; for, before the art of writing was invented, hardly any other kind of history was possible. Now, it is well known that traditions of the Flood are wide as the world. They are found among peoples the most dissimilar. They are found in all portions of the globe, among nations separated by the widest chasms of distance. As in the case of the traditions of creation, the Chaldæan account of the Deluge comes nearest to the scriptural. It has been said that these floating rumours of the great catastrophe, though found among all other peoples, have no existence among the descendants of Ham; but this limitation Professor Rawlinson denies. These traditions

are like the broken fragments of a mirror; they all reflect, but each reflects only certain aspects of the truth. They have been discovered in China and India, Fiji, and among the inhabitants of the Polynesian Islands. They survive in the New World as well as in the Old. Mr. Catlin says he found them among at least one hundred and twenty of the tribes of America. Of all traditions this comes nearest to universal, and the contention is that it is impossible to account for them unless upon the supposition that they have all radiated from one common centre, and that they all date back their origin to a literal event. The force of this is felt by those in whom some other kinds of evidence fail to work conviction. Mr. Gladstone, in *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, quotes Mr. Howorth's work called *The Mammoth and the Flood*, of the author of which he speaks as of one "certainly not bound by any superstitious reverence for the mere text of the Book of Genesis." "The Flood," Mr. Howorth says, "points to a widespread calamity," and adds, "I do not see how the historian, the archæologist, and the palæontologist, can avoid making this conclusion in future a prime factor in their discussions, and I venture to think that before long it will be accepted as unanswerable." From Lenormant's *Origins of History*, he thus writes: "A remembrance prevailing everywhere, so precise and so concordant, cannot belong to a myth arbitrarily invented. No religious or cosmogonic myth presents such a character of universality. It must of necessity be a recollection of a great and terrible occurrence, which impressed the imagination of the ancestors of our race so powerfully as never to be forgotten by their descendants."

Then, again, the author of Genesis ventures upon the

assertion that there was a time when there was but one language in use among men. It is very assuring to see how Bible truths hang together. They do so in this case. Of course, if the race of man sprang from one pair, there was originally but one language; and (which is quite as much to the point) if Noah and his family were the only individuals preserved in the ark when "the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished," it goes without saying there was a time when there was but one form of speech. In 1826, Balbi reckoned that there were some 860 distinctly different languages at that time in the world, and he reckoned too few. The question, therefore, comes up for discussion, Can all these different languages be traced up to one? Is there sufficient affinity of any sort existing among them to warrant the conclusion that they are all related? Now, these are questions for science to answer, if she is capable. What has she to say? A hundred years ago she must have confessed her inability. During the last century, comparative philology, that promising offspring of inductive philosophy, has been born. The work accomplished is prodigious. The facts established are most interesting and most satisfactory. It is announced, and that with surprising unanimity, that all languages may be grouped into three classes—the Aryan, the Semitic, and the Turanian; and it is suggested that as far as we have gone, there have been discovered some striking affinities existing among these three; and there is nothing forthcoming on the other side to discourage the expectation that some day the oneness of origin for all the dialects of this Babel earth may be demonstrated. Bunsen, it is thought, has proved the Asiatic origin of the North

American Indians, and of the languages in which they converse. Dr. Latham says, "That the uniformity of languages throughout Africa is greater than it is either in Asia or Europe, to that I have not the slightest hesitation to commit myself." Dr. Caldwell says, "The pre-Aryan inhabitants of the Deccan have been proved by their language alone, in the silence of history, in the absence of all ordinary probabilities, to be allied to the tribes which appear to have overspread Europe before the arrival of the Goths and of the Pelasgi, and even before the arrival of the Celts." Meyer says, "One of the grandest results of comparative philology has been to show that all languages belong to one common stock." But, above all, Max Müller, the prince of philologers, in reply to the question, "Can we reconcile with the three distinct forms of speech the admission of one common origin of human language? I answer, decidedly Yes!" Once more, then, science, unbiassed science, stands forth an authoritative witness to the credibility of the Mosaic writings.

And yet again, in the tenth chapter of Genesis, we have an account of certain nations descended from the three sons of Noah. All nations on earth are not comprised, but chiefly those in which the Jew, as a Jew, took an interest. According to the nineteenth verse of this chapter, it would seem to refer to the time of Abraham. Upon this valuable document the Camden Professor of Ancient History in the University of Oxford, in his book called *The Origin of Nations*, writes: "It has been shown that in no respect is there any contradiction between the teaching of modern ethnology and this venerable record. On the contrary, the record, rightly interpreted, completely harmonises with the

science; and not only so, but anticipates many of the more curious and remarkable discoveries which ethnology has made in comparatively recent times." Mr. Garbett, in *God's Word Written*, has a very conclusive passage: "In Gen. x. 8, we are told that the earliest inhabitants of the great alluvial plain at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates were of Ethiopic origin. 'Cush begat Nimrod . . . and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.' The great majority of modern ethnologists have held an opinion directly contradictory to the scriptural statement. They believed them to be Aramæans sprung from Shem, and not from Ham the father of Cush. A whole array of great names supported this conclusion with the utmost confidence. The contradictions thus given to Scripture were supported by affinities of language between the Babylonians of the time of Nebuchadnezzar and the Hebrews, and by the close international connection existing between the Babylonians and Assyrians. So irrefragable were these arguments held to be, that the attempt to maintain the accuracy of the Biblical account was scouted almost with contempt; and yet it is now certain the Bible is right, and the ethnologists wrong. The mounds of Chaldæa have been recently explored, and inscriptions have been discovered, proving that the language of ancient Babylonia was not the language of the times of Nebuchadnezzar, but belonged to a different family, and this family Cushite or Ethiopian." Thus, again and again have science and history come forth to rescue the sacred writings from the imputation that they are composed of myths and old wives' fables, and to demonstrate their perfect authenticity.

CHAPTER III.

PROOFS OF INSPIRATION FROM GENERAL SOURCES.

Dell things which existed prior to man,

THE inspiration of the Bible has been argued on the ground that it contains matters that took place before man lived, and therefore the knowledge of these things must have been given him from heaven. Now, let us turn to a certain class of information which some of the Bible writers possessed, relating to events which took place long ages after they had breathed their last. Prophecy shall, for a moment, engage our attention. Outside the covers of the Word of God there is no such a thing as prophecy. The two examples culled from Pagan literature cannot stand investigation. Prophecy is nothing less than a miracle of intelligence, just as some others are miracles of power. It is a convincing display of Divine omniscience. Nor is this all. In addition to pre-vision there was evidently pre-determination; and, of course, back of that a power that in the face of every kind of hindrance was capable of carrying out the thing determined. But it will be said, these predictions sometimes failed of their accomplishment. No, they never failed. They appeared to do so, because we lose sight of the fact that they were based upon certain conditions. The principle laid down by Jeremiah must not be forgotten: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull

down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jonah was sent to prophesy against Nineveh, that Nineveh should be destroyed; but Nineveh repented, and Nineveh was spared. It was promised to David that his descendants should sit upon his throne for evermore. But David's descendants proved unfaithful, and his throne was given to others to occupy. Human accountability is never lost sight of by the moral Governor of the world. There is a law ruling things contingent, hidden, as a rule, from man; but "all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." We talk of accident and chance; and to us a large class of things appear to be of these, but it is not so. God's purpose underlies them all. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is from the Lord." We sometimes shrewdly guess what certain persons, under certain circumstances, will do; but where we guess, God knows. With Him all history, all eternity, is as the present moment is to us; and some of those things of which He has this perfect knowledge He revealed to His servants the prophets. There are three characteristics of genuine prophecy. It must be published before the event. There must be no contrivance on the part of the prophet to bring about his own predictions. The predictions must be substantially fulfilled. The highest compliment to the prophet's descriptive accuracy is paid by those who argue

that he wrote his account after the event, and not before it. But this is a species of shuffling unworthy the learning and ability of many sceptics. They have, in their despair, resorted to the most dishonest expedients, such as altering texts and perverting facts, and that without any literary excuse. According to the date of Nahum's activity, endorsed by Rationalists themselves, he clearly foretold the destruction of Nineveh at least a hundred years before the event took place. Josephus says a hundred and fifteen years before. For several years previous, Micah predicted the overthrow of Samaria. The conquest of the Jews, and the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the carrying away of the people to Babylon as captives was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and fifty years before it happened. After a protracted siege of thirteen years, Tyre, the world-known centre of ancient commerce, was taken, or it capitulated to Nebuchadnezzar; and this was foreseen by the same prophet at least a hundred and thirty years before. In like manner, Amos foretold the going into captivity of the ten tribes of Israel sixty years before. Other examples might be selected, such as the predicted judgments against Egypt and Edom and Moab. The Jews themselves furnish a striking illustration of the fulfilment of their own prophetic writings. Frederick the Great of Prussia, it is said, demanded of his chaplain that he should put in the fewest words what he took to be the strongest evidence of Bible truth. "The Jews, your Majesty," was the prompt reply. They have been conquered, exiled, scattered to the four winds under heaven. They have been subjected to wholesale slaughter, enslaved, persecuted, from generation to generation. Yet they have not become extinct like Assyria,

Babylonia, Phœnicia, and Egypt. They have not been absorbed by other nations; they are still a people, whose dwelling-place is everywhere, but whose home is nowhere. They are before the eyes of the world to-day in evidence of the heaven-given foresight of their own seers. Take, again, the predictions concerning the Messiah. For the space of something like a thousand years, one prophet after another foretold of Him, and of His days. At first, the faintest outline of Him was struck off, then one after another added some feature, until the portrait was complete. The character to be drawn, the work to be accomplished, the person to be described, was so complex: Human and Divine, a servant and yet a King, dishonoured almost to degradation, and yet the Lord of Glory: perfect in comeliness, and yet there is no beauty that we should desire Him. No wonder that these predictions appeared to contradict and neutralise each other; and yet every lineament of that picture is true to life, every act of that wonderful ministry perfectly correct: so minute and literal are those foreshadowings of the God-man, that it is almost true that you might destroy the Gospels and rewrite them from the prophets. And these predictions were certainly not published after the event. The same might be said of forty or fifty others. Let any honest doubter of the inspiration of the Bible take up the prophecies, and study them in the light of the present condition of the nations or cities or peoples referred to, and he will find that modern travellers visiting these spots cannot describe the present state of Nineveh, and Babylon, and Tyre, and Edom more graphically than by using the very words of those old Hebrew seers, who wrote some twenty centuries ago. It

is impossible, therefore, to deny them foresight; but foresight is a supernatural endowment. Whatever and however varied man's capacities may be, strictly speaking he has no foresight of things contingent. In matters pertaining to our highest personal welfare, we have nothing worth calling foreknowledge. A veil, hiding the future, hangs before our eyes, and only shifts a step as time moves on a step. We pay our money to buy the privilege of going on board a vessel that will presently be wrecked. We walk unconsciously into the very jaws of death. In a thousand instances, a little foresight would make our fortune, or prevent our losing one. If we could only peer into the future for a single hour, it would often enable us to avoid our ruin. But in these Hebrew prophets we have an order of men who could not only discern matter relating to themselves, but who could anticipate the fate of nations and cities, and forecast the actions of individuals yet unborn. Now, this is one of the things to be accounted for; and, seeing that man naturally has not the gift of foresight, there is no other way to account for it than the way these very prophets accounted for it, viz., that this superhuman knowledge was communicated to them direct by Him to Whom all things are known, and from Whom no secrets are hid.

Another proof that the Book of books is worthy one of the titles it bears, "the oracles of God," is found in the religious thoughts it contains. Here we find three subjects set forth in a manner that uninspired men have never set them forth. These three are God, sin, righteousness; and these three are the constituents of religion. The first is God. Now, it is so, that wherever the Bible idea of God has never been made known through the

Bible, it does not exist. Nay, more, it may be doubted whether this idea, though once possessed, could be retained without its being fixed and made permanent in an inspired record. Destroy the Scriptures to-day, and how long would the Church preserve the truth in its integrity? Let any of us cease to read God's Word, in which God reveals Himself, and how long should we retain the idea of God as one of the principal elements of our spiritual life? or, in other words, how long could the life of our souls be maintained after being deprived of that necessary food provided in God's Word for its sustentation? It is a mere truism to say the Bible idea of God is perfect. To it you can add nothing, and you must take nothing away. Christians have sometimes been taunted by their opponents because they say their descriptions of God are made up of nothing but negations. It is not so with the Scriptures. They seldom employ a negation. True, we are told God cannot lie, that He cannot deny Himself; and there are few affirmatives more significant than these. The Bible uniformly tells us what God is. It clothes Him with attributes the highest conceivable. It covers Him with a glory so resplendent as almost to blind our vision. It ascribes to Him all imaginable perfections. In Him widest extremes unite. Plurality co-exists with oneness. "There is a trinity of persons, a diversity of properties, a variety of offices, a multiplicity of operations, yet sameness of nature, equality of power and glory, oneness in purpose and affections, and harmony in will and work." Above all, He is essentially holy, awfully righteous, but indescribably merciful. He sustains to us every endearing relation, such as Judge, and Father, and Sovereign, and Saviour.

One feels sometimes as if we ought to have a sacred language, like the vessels of the temple, set apart for holy service exclusively, so that words used of God should be used of none beside. If, for instance, we call God perfect, to whom or what beside shall we apply the term? for God is infinitely and immeasurably above the highest of His creatures. Now, whence comes this idea which we find nowhere but in the Bible, simply because no one beside the Bible writers ever conceived it? There is but one answer; it was God-revealed.

The second term is sin. Now, sin in the Bible sense is found nowhere but in the Bible. The truth is, the conscience of paganism is dead—"past feeling," "twice dead, plucked up by the roots," "seared as with a hot iron," "their very mind and conscience are defiled." Perhaps no part of man's complex nature has suffered more from the fall than conscience. Heathenism, past and present, is a polluted and a polluting thing. Its very gods are incarnations of the worst vices of the populace. There is a complete divorce between what is called religion and morality. The Hindu, in his easy optimism, is satisfied with the idea that muddy water reaches the ocean as surely and as swiftly as water that is clear. The apostle portrays the paganism of his times in colours borrowed from perdition; and what it was in his day, so it is now. "Those sacred books of yours are not as old as you say they are," said a Hindu to one of your missionaries one day. "They have been written since your preachers came here first. The description is so exact as to the state of India that only one who was an eye-witness could have written it." Sin as a mistake, sin as a misfortune, especially if found out,

for, though it might not create a sense of guilt, it might in that case produce a sense of shame. The Greeks called sin "ugliness," meaning that it was inartistic, something out of harmony with and an offence against taste. But sin as a disease, sin as a schism in the soul, sin as a hell of burning agony in the conscience, sin as something eternally and essentially antagonistic to God—the fetid, loathsome, hateful thing it is—of all this they never dreamt. To assert that no sprig of goodness grows in this waste, arid wilderness would be untrue; to say that pagans are altogether destitute of virtue would be unjust; but heathenism as a whole is such a Stygian lake of seething corruptions, it is such a libel upon man's boasted reason, it is so foul a blot upon human history, that we turn away from the very thought of it soul-sick and abashed. And yet they might plead excuse. They have no standard of right. They have no law by whose authority conscience can be regulated, and conscience, like our watches, will get wrong; and as we need in the one case to go to the sun-dial to set them right, so in the other we need to come to God's written code of rectitude to regulate the moral sense. St. Paul says, "By the law is the knowledge of sin," and that he himself had not known sin but by the law. It is the work of the Spirit to convince the world of sin, as the initial step towards the world's salvation. Still, on no account is the natural conscience to be ignored, of which such a profound thinker as Kant—the German Plato as he has been styled, only that German Plato was after all by descent a Scotchman—has said that two things chiefly excited his admiration, "the starry sky above, and the moral law within." All that is intended is this: con-

science, like reason, is not sufficient without a revelation. Paley, in his *Evidences of Christianity*, would not argue for the necessity of a revelation, because he said no one who knew anything about the matter ever denied the necessity. Conscience is an echo of the voice of God, and her authority is a delegated authority. It is not sovereign, but suzerain. In the State of Mansoul it is Lord Chief Justice; but even this highest legal functionary can only *administer* law. It is not his province *to make* it. In matters of religion, God's authority is supreme. "The Lord is our Lawgiver." We have inspired authority for saying that all sin is the transgression of the law, and where there is no law there is no transgression. The sense of sin is the accusing voice of law, of which Hooker has eloquently written: "Of law there can be no less acknowledged than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempt from her power, both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." And this, moreover, must be said, that there is perfect agreement between the Christian religion and the highest form of moral consciousness; and, beyond question, this is evidence that the Author of the Bible is the Creator of conscience.

The last Bible idea, of first importance, is righteousness. It is said of these inspired writings that "herein is the righteousness of God revealed." This may mean three things. First, herein is the attribute of God's righteousness revealed, and this is true; or it may mean, herein

is revealed the method which God devised of making the sinful righteous; or, thirdly, it may mean, herein is revealed and brought into clear light that quality in man which God, the Judge of all, regards as righteousness, to which righteousness He has promised the reward of life eternal. This last sense of the phrase is the one to be considered here. The scriptural response to the question, What is virtue? what is duty? what is righteousness? is as lucid as sunshine. The law of the Lord is perfect, and love is the fulfilling of the law. Our duty to God as our Creator is consecration. Our duty to God as our Father is love. Our duty to God as our Sovereign is obedience. All morality, which includes duty to our fellow man, is briefly comprehended in this saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Locke rightly remarks, "The fundamental principle of all social ethics is wrapped up in the golden sentence of the Great Teacher, 'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'" The same limitless word covers alike our obligation to God and our obligation to man. Love gives the creature affinity with the Creator. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Love to our neighbour secures the object of the Utilitarian —the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and goes a long way beyond it. It is impossible even to imagine the social condition of mankind, if this law could be made absolute, that every man should love his fellow in any practical degree as he loves himself. This is one of the strongest confirmations of the heavenly origin of the Christian religion. Its effect is to make man like God, and

earth like heaven. The religion of the Bible is the religion of love. No being could be the author and end of such a religion but God, and God could be the Author of no other. Dr. Payne defines rectitude to be "conformity to relations"; and if so, the Bible, as we have seen, insists on this as no other book in the world does. Love is the bond of perfectness. There is no vague nonsense here about "a power not us that makes for righteousness," with its utter want of that "lucidity" which its author so imperiously demanded of others. It is a *person*, not a mere *power*, that makes for righteousness. The love just spoken of is personal love. It is on man's part the love of a Person who is supremely righteous, and the love of righteousness makes one righteous. Love is the mightiest assimilating force in operation, and hence the love of Christ is so potent to transform and regenerate the human soul. The spirit that animated the men that wrote the Scriptures was the Holy Spirit. The men themselves were holy, and hence the writings produced are holy. Every author breathes himself into the book he writes. The book is an incarnation of his own spirit, and so with the Scriptures. They are inbreathed of God. Just as God the Son became incarnate in human flesh, so God the Spirit incorporated Himself in human speech; and this being so, we need not and cannot have a directer evidence of its inspiration.

In addition to its pure and lofty ethics, the student of the Bible is struck with its wonderful *unity*. It is an organic whole. There is no parallel to this, nor any approach to this, anywhere else. Ordinary authors often contradict themselves; the difference between the same person in youth and age is sometimes surprising. This

library of sacred literature consists of sixty-six different compositions. They were written by some five-and-thirty different persons. They were in process of composition some fifteen hundred years, a period considerably longer than from Cædmon to Tennyson. These authors were men of all degrees of culture. They occupied almost every social station. They were shepherds, husbandmen, fishers, princes, warriors, statesmen, priests. They were associated with strongly contrasted events. They lived amid strangely diversified environments. They themselves differed in temperament, habits of thought, and modes of expression. They could have had no collusion with one another, for they lived, some of them, hundreds of miles apart, and in point of time they were cut off from each other's fellowship by the gulf of centuries; and yet what surprising agreement! Many a preacher differs more from himself in the same sermon than the widest extremes of these differ from one another. There is no clashing of opinion, no strife of words. They deal with the loftiest questions of morals. They handle matters the most delicate and abstruse. They render solutions of the greatest social problems. They intermeddle with all sorts of knowledge; and yet what perfect harmony of thought and sentiment! Compare this with the chaos of opinions in the Christian Church to-day. Go into our one hundred and eighty licensed places of worship used by the different religious sects under the protection of the Government, and listen to the war of words and clashing of opinions. Consult some five-and-thirty judges on a point of law, and you will get almost as many judgments. Consult five-and-thirty politicians, and on all points no two will agree.

Call in five-and-thirty doctors to a sick man, and let them put him under their different treatments, and you know the consequences. Employ some five-and-thirty architects to build you a cathedral; let them draw up plans, and each erect a portion according to his plan; and what would be the consequence? What sort of an edifice would be obtained as the result of their united operations? It would be a nondescript, like nothing in heaven above or earth beneath. But go and view one of our grand cathedrals, as we have them. Most likely five-and-thirty different sets of craftsmen wrought upon St. Paul's, and yet you have harmony, proportion, unity! How is this? Why, no matter how many different *hands* were employed, there was but one all-directing, all-controlling *mind*. This is the reason. So is it with the Bible. One mind informed the writer, one spirit animated and illumined all. Bees are most skilful workers, but bees work in the dark. It is said the embroiderers of the Bayeux tapestry worked behind their work. Each had his part of the long pattern to do. He knew nothing of what went before or what followed after. He just had his own section to do, and he did it. It was exactly so with the inspired writers. They were often unconscious of the purpose and the use that would be made of their writings. Paul writes an epistle about an absconded slave. Maybe he had no idea that that epistle would be read Sabbath by Sabbath all down the centuries, in hundreds of different languages, and in all parts of the globe; and so in numerous instances. An event transpires in the little State of Judea—the whole kingdom was not larger than Norfolk and Suffolk united,—it becomes the occasion for one of the prophets to utter

one of his predictions. Perhaps he little thought he was saying that which would be matter of many sermons and voluminous discussions millenniums after. A circumstance arises in some Christian community—say, in the church at Corinth or Colosse. One of the members has occasioned a scandal, or some incipient heresy is budding, and so Paul writes a letter to put matters right. Maybe it never entered his thought that he was delivering himself to an audience as wide as the world, the successive gatherings of which would come together from generation to generation till time should be no more. Ah! but if apostles and prophets did not know the full extent of what they were doing, that Spirit by which they were inspired did. And this brings out another feature of these sacred writings. They belong especially to no locality. They were written for no particular age, but for all ages. Hence they never grow old. The freshness of eternal youth is on them. Facts of this kind require no argument to commend them. They take rank among self-evident truths. Here, while God reveals His mind, He does not conceal His hand.

Again, the supernatural parentage of the Bible is demonstrated by the spiritual power there lives in it, and by the effects it has produced. You can say of it what you can say of no other book, it creates an *experience*. The philosophy of the Bible is experimental philosophy. There is nothing more tangible and real than experience. There is no evidence like the evidence of experience. Millions have proved it the power of God to their salvation. They say, "We know we have passed from death unto life." And surely such a transition is a matter of consciousness. Lazarus surely was conscious of the differ-

Experience!

ence between sitting at supper side by side with his Restorer and his happy friends, and sleeping the sleep of the dead in his sepulchre. Hosts of individuals, known as among the wisest and most truthful of their species, have asserted, in the most emphatic manner, that they have been, through the soul-converting power of God's Word, made partakers of a new life—a new life of thought and feeling, and purpose and motive; and that they have lived in the enjoyment of this new life without intermission for a long series of years. Now, against this Epignosticism—that is, this full assurance of faith, of hope, and of the understanding—Agnosticism is not to be listened to. And, moreover, the change in the outer life and character was quite as obvious to those who knew them best as the inward experience was patent to themselves. No men could give more substantial proof of their sincerity than those men have given. Out of loyalty to Christ, they have suffered the loss of life and all things. They have been immured in loathsome dungeons; they have been exiled from country and kin; they have confronted dangers and endured privations innumerable; and in deadly climes consumed their lives to propagate this faith. They have looked death in the face without a shudder, as if incapable of fear. Now, a book that breathes such inspiration must be itself inspired. It is a scientific axiom that only that which lives can produce life. Is it in the power of a lie to bring about such effects as these? Then the relation of cause to effect exists no longer, never did exist. There is no better test than, "By their fruits ye shall know them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, neither can a

corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Where in the wide world will you find men to match those Bible worthies? Enoch, one of the whitest souls that ever dwelt in "this muddy vesture of decay," for three hundred years kept pace with God; and was not, for God took him. Abraham, "The Friend of God"—*The Friend*, as he is still called in the East. Moses, statesman, scholar, poet, prophet, author, reformer, saint—the greatest name in ancient story. Isaiah, whose "soul was like a star and dwelt apart." Daniel, the courtly, the incorruptible. Paul, the Ajax of the Church militant. John—if one may say so—the *alter ego* of the Man Christ Jesus; to say nothing of those lesser lights that gem the spiritual firmament, multitudinous as the hosts of heaven, and of which there has been no break in the succession since patriarchal times. They are absolutely peerless: so much so, that to us ordinary mortals the attempt to struggle up to the altitudes they reached seems hopeless. The greatest of earth's sons have delighted to do them honour. If the suffrages of genius could decide the question of their superhuman excellency and surpassing moral beauty, the matter would not hang in suspense an hour. Shakespeare quotes them to enrich his pages. Bacon pays them sincere homage. Locke was a believer. In those high realms of truth, Milton lived and moved and had his being. Newton devoted his last days to their study. The Brownings served as Levites in the courts of this sanctuary. Scott, when dying, requested those about him to read to him. "What shall we read?" was asked. "What shall you read?" he replied. "There is only one book to read now, the Gospel of St. John." When Arthur Stanley and his Oxford friends

first met Ewald, that prodigy of scholarship, he held up his Greek New Testament in his hand, and said: "Gentlemen, all the wisdom in the world is contained in this little book." But we must pause. If all the great ones of earth were allowed to bring their votive offerings, the shrine itself would be buried with them. These books of Scripture are not only a literature, they have created a literature. If all the books written about and upon the Bible could be piled together, they would surpass in magnitude the largest of the Pyramids. The indirect effects of the Holy Scriptures, though secondary, are very surprising. They have given birth to nations, and raised tribes of barbarians to the highest efficiency. Of this, we English are an illustration. They have been the foster-mother of art and science, and there is not a civilised nation upon earth whose legislation is not based upon their principles. The Bible was the first preacher of liberty. It has built hospitals and alms-houses and asylums; converted prisons into palaces. It has well-nigh abolished slavery and polygamy, and wonderfully softened the horrors of war; and had it might upon its side, as it has right, it would cause wars to cease to the end of the world. One's patience is sometimes tried when we hear and read the aspersions cast upon the Scriptures and their writers by a host of carping, cavilling infidels, when we know so well that there is not one of all the crew whose moral and intellectual standpoint is sufficiently lofty to enable him to touch the hem of the outer garment of those High Priests of righteousness.

Another striking feature of the book is its wonderful vitality. Just call to mind that the earliest portions, as we have them, were put in writing when Egypt was in its

glory, before the word London had been heard on human lips, when our forefathers were tattooed barbarians, or, probably, before the first emigrant had set foot upon our shores, or the waves of Celtic population had reached the utmost limit of the west of Europe; before there was a dweller, maybe, on the site of Rome, or the sun of Babylon and Nineveh had risen above the horizon. The Old Testament was completed when Plato was learning his letters. Since the Bible began to be written, tribes, cities, nations have sprung up, and flourished, and decayed, and vanished like an apparition. But the book has lived through it all. It was carried about in the wilderness. Portions of it were read when the chosen people entered the Promised Land. The missionary priest (and was he not the first missionary?) read the first five books of it to the Samaritans, when the Samaritan nation was in its infancy; the Samaritan nation has long since ceased to be a nation, and the Samaritan people likewise have almost become extinct. They are said to be the smallest and oldest religious community extant. In the time of some of the apostate Kings of Israel and Judah the book was neglected, till, as some have thought, there was but one complete copy left. It was translated in the time of the Ptolemies. It was read by the exiles under the walls of Babylon and in the suburbs of Nineveh. The mad King of Syria burnt every copy he could lay hands upon, so that there appeared great danger lest the world should lose the inestimable treasure. In the Middle Ages, Bibles in England were scarce. It is on record that the Bishop of Winchester borrowed a copy of the Scriptures from the abbot of the same place, and a bond was drawn up in legal form to insure the due return of the loan.

Then came the discovery of the art of printing, and the Reformation, and the great revival of the last century. Then the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, and this Society alone has printed 120,136,000 copies of the Scriptures in no less than 290 different dialects and tongues. No book is so popular. Never was it so improbable that the Bible should die out. The book is conscious of its own immortality; its testimony to itself is, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever."

A strong argument may be founded upon the testimony of the inspired writers themselves. They tell us emphatically that they were conscious that a spirit and a power not their own was on them and in them. They tell us the word of the Lord came to them—that the hand of the Lord was on them—that the breath of the Lord was in them. All this was unmistakably objective to them. It was not an excitement produced by the operations of their own spirit upon itself. It was as clearly outside of them as the light of the sun is outside the eye, or as the sound of another's voice is outside the ear. In all their experience, the distinction between the *ego* and the *non-ego* was never more defined. The effect upon the subject of inspiration was sometimes very impressive. It is said of Saul that, when the Divine afflatus came upon him, "he stripped off his clothes, and prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night." One prophet says, "O Lord, I have heard Thy speech, and was afraid. When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in

myself." Sometimes the prophet shrank from the task assigned him, as Jeremiah did; but he could not forbear, for he says, "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I could not stay." Again, "All my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the word of the Lord, and because of the words of His holiness." Daniel says, "Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength." On another occasion he tells us, "And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days; and I was astonished at the vision." Now, it is this perfect consciousness on the part of the prophet as to what was the word of the Lord, and what was his own word—it is in his conscious ability to discriminate between these, and hold them distinctly apart, that we discover an answer to the question, Why were some books—not only books written by persons claiming to be prophets, but books written by men who were the undoubted subjects of inspiration—excluded from the Canon? We have reference to books in the Old Testament, bearing such titles as "The Book of Samuel the Seer," "The Words of Nathan the Prophet," and "The Words of Gad the Seer," "The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite," "The Vision of Iddo the Seer against Jeroboam the Son of Nebat." There were some fifteen of these lost writings. The question has been long and warmly debated, as has also been the question whether St. Paul's first epistle is lost, and whether that was inspired. But what is more significant, we have allusions to writings of Isaiah which have not come down to us. "The rest of the acts of Uzziah,

first and last, did Isaiah the prophet the son of Amos write;" but they form no part of our Scriptures. The same may be said of "the story or *midrash* of Abijah and his ways and his sayings," composed by the prophet Iddo; and so, again, of the prayer of Manasseh, and other items of his history, "written among the sayings of the seers" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 19). Now, how is it that some of the writings of the same person should be admitted into the canon of Scripture and accepted as inspired, while to other compositions of the same individual no such honour should be accorded? The answer, no doubt, is, the prophetic writer knew perfectly well which of his sayings and writings were indited by the Spirit of God, and which were not; and so he asserted inspiration for those, but not for these. With respect to one, he declared, "Thus saith the Lord;" for the other, he claimed no such authority. One he was commanded to write, and lay the book up as a memorial before the Lord, as Moses was. The other he was not. In instances too numerous to mention, this command to write was given. It was because the prophet was known and approved as a man of truth, and because he sometimes declared, in the most emphatic manner, that what he had written he was commanded to write and inspired to write, that such writing was accepted as the word of God. Upon the Church—the Jewish Church and the Christian Church—has ever devolved the responsibility of judging as to whether the credentials of the prophet were satisfactory. No doubt it was the office of the Church to judge as to whether the claims of the prophet were backed by satisfactory credentials, proving him to be a messenger of God; when this was so, the Church accepted his productions as

sacred, and therefore truthful and perfectly trustworthy. There has been a world of nonsense written about the authority of the Church to decide as to what is and what is not to be regarded as Holy Scripture. That is to reverse the divine order, which is, that the Church is built upon the apostles and prophets, because that would make the apostles and prophets to be built upon the Church. A person comes professing to be a messenger from God. The duty of the Church is to examine his credentials, whether they are genuine or not. An ambassador is sent with a special message from the Court of England to the Court of France. The first business of the French authorities is to examine his credentials. If these be valid, the message is received and read. Whatever may be the contents of the message, that is another consideration, that does not discredit the ambassador, or prove that England did not send him. Well, now, the prophets under the former Dispensation, and the apostles under the New, were the ambassadors of God. They were the legates of the skies. And it is a significant fact that there were false prophets as well as true. Where there is substance there will be shadow. If we had no sterling coinage, we should have no base money. It is the most foolish thing conceivable to counterfeit that which is worthless. The sure mark of the false prophet is that "they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord." Yet these false prophets had their uses. They aroused the vigilance of the people, and exercised them in the healthful art of discriminating between the real and the unreal. The contrast of the false with the true makes the value of the true more apparent. They acted as a constant admonition to the genuine servants of

the Lord. But to return to the argument. We have here a long succession of individuals, professedly called and sent of God. As to the strength and clearness of their intellects, they were among the most gifted of their species. As to their integrity, their sincerity, and their principles—in a word, the holiness of their life and character—they have seldom, if ever, been equalled—certainly never surpassed; and as they could not be mistaken, if they were not commissioned by Heaven, if they were intrusted with no message from God, they were conscious impostors and gross and deliberate perjurers. Then trust in man must die out—then religion is a curse of which the world will do well to rid herself—then angels are devils, and devils are saints. Now, we refuse to accept this libel upon humanity. It is against experience. It violates our common sense. It is absurdly unscientific. Nor is this all. The men of the times of the prophets and apostles, the men who lived with them and knew them, and were in an infinitely better position to judge of them than we, believed in them. These men have been from age to age, for more than thirty centuries, conspicuous for wisdom and virtue, the salt of the earth, the brightest lights of the sanctuary; and we are asked, at the instance of a few carping sceptics—mostly godless—not stronger intellects, not better scholars than those who hold the faith they seek to overturn; we are asked, we say, to come to the conclusion that all along, from the beginning until now, the best and wisest of our race have been idiots, duped and deluded by a long line of unprincipled pretenders. Our answer is, We cannot so conclude. Faith in God and faith in man forbid us. The prophets and apostles believed themselves, and the people believed them;

because they felt that incredulity in such a case would be treason towards conscience and common sense, and that such scepticism, to be consistent, would henceforth believe in no thing and no body.

But it has frequently been said that the Bible history is contradicted by secular history. Now, to cite secular history as a witness will answer a twofold purpose. It will dispose of certain supposed discrepancies, and secular history will be shown to be for the truth of sacred history, and not against it. It would be too much to expect secular history to agree in every point with sacred, because secular history is very far from always agreeing with itself. This is undeniably true, whether we take ancient history or modern. Upon no subject have the discoveries of the nineteenth century thrown a stronger light than upon the history of nations well-nigh forgotten. Never was that dim and distant past understood as it is now. It is a remarkable fact that as we recede further and further from the past, our vision of it becomes more and more distinct, and our knowledge of it becomes more and more exact and vivid. As it was at the crucifixion that "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves," so in these modern times cities and nations entombed for centuries have experienced a resurrection. Nineveh and Babylon, and fifty other places, the early centres of the world's population, had passed out of sight. They were almost forgotten. The sites they occupied were matters of dispute. It was because their names remained upon the imperishable record

that so great an interest was felt in them as to induce modern enterprise, at a great cost of ingenuity and labour and money, to explore their sepulchres. And the testimony of the contents of these grassy mounds is marvellous. It is as if God stored away this crowd of witnesses, and at the opportune moment He made them come trooping up to attest the statements of His word. The veil of oblivion has been rent, if not exactly from the top to the bottom, the schism is very considerable; and thanks to such men as Rawlinson, and Sayce, and Schrader, and Tomkins, and Budge the secrets of antiquity are secrets no longer. Bishop Butler lays great stress on the general harmony between the statements of Scripture and historic facts, not only in the prophetical portion, but in the ordinary narrative; and contends its general correspondence with the world's history, as gathered from extraneous sources, is a strong argument for its veracity. The test is a very severe one. If any other book than the Bible could abide such a test, its integrity would be at once placed beyond criticism. In round numbers, we have a history of two thousand years between Noah and Nehemiah, and throughout this entire period sacred history touches secular history upon points too numerous to reckon. The history of almost all the nations and kingdoms that surrounded Palestine is interwoven more or less with the history of the chosen people. Now, how do the various records match with one another? A high authority has said, "From this vast area, searched as it has been with increasing diligence alike by the friends of the Bible and by its foes, not one solitary case of proved inaccuracy has yet been gathered. This very fact is itself a wonder, and witnesses trumpet-tongued to the more than

human Authorship which alone can explain this more than human accuracy, over so vast a lapse of time and variety of topics." In the tenth of Genesis we read of "Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah." Now, modern discovery has identified these names upon the ancient inscriptions, and their sites have been verified; so that they stand on our maps, eighteen centuries after Christ, just as they were chronicled by the inspired historian fifteen centuries before Christ. In the same chapter we are told of Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before the Lord." The inscriptions recently discovered confirm this description of Nimrod. His name is still familiar in these regions. In Judges we read of Chushan-Rishathaim as king of Mesopotamia. Now, Mesopotamia was believed to be from time immemorial a part of the Assyrian Empire, and therefore could not be ruled by an independent sovereign. But the cuneiform inscriptions prove that not for two hundred years after this did the Assyrian Empire extend over this district. Isaiah mentions an Assyrian king by the name of Sargon, who attacked and took the city of Ashdod. Now, as Sargon's name could not be met with in secular history, it was readily concluded that Isaiah was in error. But Sargon's name has been found among the inscriptions, with a note to the effect that he took Ashdod and conquered Egypt, just as the prophet related and foretold. The tribute paid to Sennacherib by King Hezekiah is stated as thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver. The Chaldæan inscription gives the same sum, excepting that it makes the silver eight hundred instead of

three. Most likely the larger sum includes the spoils as well as the tribute. Sennacherib was succeeded by Esarhaddon. So says Isaiah, and so say the inscriptions. By inference, it was Esarhaddon who took Manasseh, and carried him to Babylon. But how was it that a king of Assyria took his captive to Babylon? This, of course, was seized upon as an error in the inspired record. But it has been proved, from the inscriptions, that this Assyrian monarch alone reigned at Babylon, and held his court there, and so the sacred annals are triumphantly confirmed. One of the standing difficulties of Bible story, on account of which infidelity impugned the record with much violence—and may it not be said malignity?—was that of the conquest of Babylon, and the death of King Belshazzar. Daniel says, "In that night," the night when the city was captured, "was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldæans slain: and Darius the Median took the kingdom." Now, secular history knew nothing of Belshazzar, not even his name. Moreover, Herodotus and Berosus agreed in affirming that the last king of Babylonia was not Belshazzar, but Nabonidus; and they declared he was not in the city when it was captured, and that he was not slain, but that he was allowed to retire with military honours; and that he lived for many years after upon a handsome pension. So the matter stood, from age to age, and no satisfactory solution could be discovered. At last, in 1854, Colonel Rawlinson found inscriptions at Mugheir—the Ur of the Chaldees—to the effect that the last Babylonian king, Nabonidus, associated his son Belshazzar with him in the government, and so the whole matter was established beyond dispute, and incidentally an explanation supplied as to why Daniel took rank as third

in the kingdom, and not second, as Joseph did in Egypt.

There were similar difficulties in the New Testament as in the Old, and like those they have been only recently overcome. Luke speaks of a certain taxing decreed by Augustus, which he goes on to say was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Now, according to secular history, Cyrenius was not governor of Syria till about eight years after the birth of the Saviour. How was this collision of authorities to be adjusted? The learned taxed their ingenuity to the utmost, and failed, and were ready to give up in despair. A few years ago, A. W. Zumpt, nephew of the great grammarian of that name, by one of those patient and elaborate processes of investigation for which the Germans are so famous, demonstrated that Cyrenius was twice governor of Syria, and that his first appointment was at the time mentioned by the evangelist. Luke, as an historian, has been put on his defence again and again. He states that Sergius Paulus was proconsul of Cyprus when Paul and Barnabas visited it together the first time. Now, this was questioned, because two famous secular writers, Strabo and Dion Cassius, stated that Cyprus being one of the provinces held by the emperor, the title of the governor should have been pro-prætor. But recent research, from which few things are hid, has ascertained that the emperor changed Cyprus for another province; and to determine the matter beyond dispute, coins have been found at Curium and Citium, on which the title proconsul was given to three governors immediate predecessors or successors of Sergius Paulus. Again, Luke's accuracy was called in question for a state-

ment made by him in the Acts of the Apostles, to the effect that Philippi was the first or chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. Now, it was well known to the learned that Amphipolis was for generations the capital of Macedonia Prima; but inasmuch as Philippi was made a colony, because of the victory gained at the base of the hill upon which the city stood, it seems that Amphipolis gradually declined, and Philippi gradually rose in importance, till it came to be regarded as the "first city of that part of Macedonia," as the writer of the Acts correctly states. For the fourth time, Luke's trustworthiness is put to the test. He calls the magistrates of Thessalonica "Politarchs," and this was an official title unknown to classic literature, and therefore open to the cavils of the critics. Now, fortunately, there stood at Thessalonica, till a few years ago, a triumphal arch bearing an inscription, and in this inscription was found the disputed word, and also a list of seven Thessalonian Politarchs; and, strange to say, three out of the seven of these dignitaries are Sosipater, Gaius, and Secundus, which three names we find in the fourth verse of the twentieth chapter of Acts; which does not prove that though they are the same names they are the same persons who filled the office of magistrates; but it does prove that these names were popular at this time. This arch some years ago was taken down, but, thanks to the British Consul stationed at Thessalonica at the time, the inscription is preserved, and placed in the British Museum. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the importance of this agreement between secular and sacred history; and, what is more, scarcely a year passes but more corroborative facts are added, and clearer light is shed upon the sacred page.

Just recently, there has been a great "find" at Tell Amarna, in Upper Egypt. In an article in the *Scottish Review* for April, 1891, by Major C. R. Conder, it is stated that the value of this discovery is second only to the discoveries of Mr. Layard some forty or fifty years ago. The "find" consists of about three hundred inscribed bricks, and they constitute a very complete military and diplomatic chronicle. These inscriptions throw considerable light upon the history of the Jewish people when they achieved the conquest of Palestine, that period of their history covered by the Books of Joshua and Judges, a period which hitherto has received but little elucidation from external sources. Major Conder remarks that "a single letter from Tell Amarna is of more value to the sober historian than a whole volume of critical conjecture, as to the ancient history of Palestine, and as to the fortunes of the Hebrew race." The work now proceeding in Palestine is full of promise. They have taken the book, as they say, to the land of its nativity; and the book fits the land, in the history and the geography, as a key fits an intricate lock. This, it is confidently expected, will be established, that the writers of the historical books will be proved to have written at the same time and place as hitherto it has been believed they did. Bashan has been visited, and the minute accuracy of the Bible narrative is abundantly established. The wilderness in which the children of Israel sojourned for forty years has been explored, and the result is the deepest conviction that no one less acquainted with the desert than Moses was could have written the Pentateuch. There is no book of its dimensions in the world so full of miscellaneous information, and its various items are receiving

such substantial confirmation as to make its truthfulness almost as apparent as that two and two make four.

To a certain class of mind, few things, perhaps nothing, would be stronger evidence of the supernatural character of the Bible than the contrast between the sacred writings and the writings of uninspired men, composed about the same time and upon the same subjects. Compare, for instance, the Old Testament, especially the Psalms and the Prophets, with the ponderous tomes of rabbinical lore. The contrast between the land of Goshen and the desert of Sahara is hardly greater. Contrast again the Old Testament Scriptures with the Apocrypha, and, although the difference is not so great, yet still you feel you are in a different atmosphere, even if you select the best (and there is a considerable difference among the books of the Apocrypha).

Come into Christian times. Compare the spurious Gospels with the real. There were, at one time or another, some seventy of these false Gospels in circulation. Several have come down to us; and they are childish and incredible in the extreme. Nothing could be more convincing as to the necessity of inspiration—and that inspiration was a substantial, tangible reality—than to put them side by side. Again, compare the Epistles of Paul and John with the Epistles of Clement and Barnabas and Hermas. These are the Apostolic Fathers. Many have believed these three are the same as the three individuals of the same name in the New Testament; but this is doubtful. Now, beyond question, these were simple, pious souls. Mr. Donaldson, in his *History of Christian Literature*, etc., remarks of these writers, "They exhibit no sign of the application of the intellect to the distinction of doctrines." He contrasts

them with pagan authors, and says, "The student could not receive a more satisfactory impression of the truth that God was working among the Christians in a remarkable manner than by turning from the fetid pages of stern Juvenal or licentious Martial to the pure, unselfish, loving words of Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, or Hermas." This witness is true. The shadow of the Cross is sanctifying; and yet the contrast between these simple, well-meaning men and the inspired apostles is as great a contrast as that between the prattle of infants and the discourse of sages. Newman, in his *Phases of Faith*, speaks of the manner in which the difference struck him when he first perused those early efforts of Christian authorship. His words are: "On the whole, this reading of the Apostolic Fathers greatly exalted my sense of the unapproachable greatness of the New Testament. The moral chasm between it and the very earliest Christian writers seemed to me so vast as only to be accounted for by the doctrine . . . that the New Testament was dictated by the immediate action of the Holy Spirit." The man who writes in such a strain as that has no right to be a sceptic. The author of *The Eclipse of Faith* observes: "The New Testament is not more different from the writings of the Jews, or superior to them, than it is different from the writings of the Fathers, and superior to *them*. It stands alone, like the Peak of Teneriffe. The Alps amidst the flats of Holland would not present a greater contrast than the New Testament and the Fathers." Mr. Gore complains that what we call the Holy Scriptures have been set too much apart by themselves, suggesting that the difference between them and the Fathers is not as striking as has been assumed. Mr.

Gore, as a High Churchman, in common with the upholders of Tridentine opinions, has, it may be, an object to serve in this. By lowering the standard of the Scriptures, the authority of what is called the Church is indirectly elevated. He writes largely about the permanent authority of the Holy Ghost in the Church. But that raises the question, Which Church? But into that we cannot wander. Certainly, beyond dispute, there are thousands of modern writers who, for moral depth and for intellectual grasp of Christian doctrine, as far outshine the earliest of the Fathers as the sun outshines the stars; and these are to be found in all the Churches of Protestant Christendom, in the New World as well as in the Old. It is—

> "Distance lends enchantment to the view,
> And clothes the mountains in their azure hue."

Compared, then, with the religious literature of their own age, a literature the authorship of Jews and Christians, there is so marked a difference between the sacred Scriptures and the writings next of kin to them as to suggest that one was natural, the other supernatural.

There is another argument for the inspiration of the Bible, deducible from the contents of the book, similar to that inferred from the account of the creation of the world; so that, if this part of the contents be simply true, it must have been inspired. It is possible to describe the Bible in a sentence. It is the history of redemption; and the redemption of the Bible is redemption by sacrifice. Now, this idea is so unusual, so improbable, so far removed from all analogies and suggestions, so contrary to all our habitudes of thought, that we may safely say it never would have "entered the heart of man" if it had not been

implanted there by some intelligence other than his own. Without the Bible, man would not have known that God was holy; would not have known that he had a soul; would not have known how God hated sin; and could not have known that sacrifice could take sin away. Perhaps he might have rested in the inference that there was a Power above him, and perhaps he might have imagined that he could express his gratitude to that Power by presenting it with a thank-offering; or perhaps he might have thought he could bribe it by a gift, or propitiate its favour by a present. But the idea of a sacrifice for sin, even as presented in the Bible, is a very complex one. The victim must suffer, because suffering and sin are inseparable. The victim must die, because life had been forfeited, and life must atone for life. The victim must be an article of food—a clean animal—suggesting that by sin man had not only forfeited life, but had forfeited that which sustains life. It must be a domesticated animal, not one taken in the chase, though clean and fit for food; because, as it were, by the care and cost and labour bestowed upon the victim, man had put, so to say, his own life in a measure into that of the offering. Hence, the key-text to the Levitical system: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life;" and hence the New Testament comment: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Every creature by right belongs to God; and that He, the Great King, should permit a rebel against His authority to make atonement for his transgression by offering to God one of God's own creatures is a relaxation of strict justice, it is an exhibition of mercy. But that God Himself should provide the

sacrifice, and that sacrifice should be His Son; that He should not spare Him, but deliver Him up for us all—Him the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, the First-born of creation, His Heir, His Fellow, His Equal, His eternal Companion, His Only-begotten; that He should endure the absence, relinquish the inexpressible delight of His fellowship, and gaze upon the dying agony of His Christ, His Anointed, is past expression, past conception, almost past belief. This was enough to confound the thought of angels; this flung all heaven into a state of amazement, out of which it has never yet recovered; and we may be well assured, a thing so far beyond all creaturely conception could never have entered into man's imagination. He could not have been expected even to believe it, if the event itself had not actually taken place, and the Holy Ghost Himself had not moved and aided holy men to put the same on record. The plan of man's salvation originated entirely with God, and God alone must have revealed the mystery to His servants. Is it true? Was God manifest in the flesh? Did He give Himself a ransom for all? Have we redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace? Then God conceived it. The ordinances that prefigured it were of God's appointing; and when the reality developed into actual history, it was God the Holy Ghost Who assisted the apostles to interpret the event, and to see in the death of Jesus a sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, and oblation for the sin of all mankind, and, finally, to commit it to writing, so that this has ever been one of the leading doctrines of the Christian religion. The scheme of redemption, then, as recorded in and forming a part of the Bible, is a strong evidence of its Divine Authorship.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

We come now to the concluding argument, more forceful and convincing than any or all the rest—the testimony of Christ and His apostles to the inspiration of both the Old and New Testament. Hitherto there has been no allusion to miracles; partly because the evidence of miracles does not apply to all the books of Scripture, for, as far as we know, some of the authors of the Bible wrought no miracles; and while the miracles of Moses confirmed the words of Moses, they answered no such purpose on behalf of the writer of Ecclesiastes, or the Book of Proverbs. And we reserved all reference to miracles till we came to Him Who was Himself the miracle of miracles, Who Himself wrought miracles so stupendous as to prove that His power was omnipotent in heaven above, and hell beneath, and earth between; and Who, moreover, was enabled to bestow that power upon others, so that they did works quite as great or greater than He Himself accomplished. The Bible tells of miracles of wisdom and miracles of power; and Christ combined both these. He was the supreme *Apocalypse*. He was at once the Revelation and the Revealer. He was the God-man. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Christ was a fact, a sublime reality—not a myth, not an idea, not an invention. As observed

by Theodore Parker, "It would take a Jesus to forge a Jesus." Neander has a similar thought. Renan said of Him, "God speaks not to Him as to one outside of Himself. God is in Him. He lives in the bosom of God, by the intercommunion of every moment." "The life and death of Socrates," said Rousseau, "were those of a sage; the life and death of Jesus those of a God." Even that cultured pagan, J. S. Mill, asks and answers his own question—"Who among the disciples of Jesus, or among the proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospel? Certainly not St. Paul." But though Christ was a reality, living before the eyes of those that wrote His biography, yet they needed to be inspired to comprehend Christ, and transmit that comprehension in all its integrity to after ages. Why require inspiration to write history? it will be asked. Why could not the Bible historians write down the facts they collected or observed, as well as other historians? By common consent, the Bible is called sacred history; all other is called secular, sometimes *profane*. The answer, therefore, is given in the meaning of those words. Bible history reveals God in history. It is the self-revelation of God in providence and grace; and providence and grace are God's right hand and left. Sacred history treats of God's purposes and plans; it interprets the principles of the moral government of the world. In secular history, man is prominent. God is lost sight of. In sacred history, man at most is secondary; God is all in all. Read modern history as written by J. A. Froude, or Mr. Green, or Lord Macaulay, and there might not be a God at all, for the scanty reference to Him in their writings.

Alison, in his *History of Europe*, attempts to trace a Providence; but Alison, for reasons we will not specify, was utterly disqualified for such a task. The Bible gives you God in nature. The thunder is His voice, the lightning the glancing of His eye. God is imminent in His works. Behind this mask of matter there dwells eternal mind. He is above all, through all, in all. The force which these devout authors saw in ceaseless operation in the universe was will-force. They had the sense to see that law was an expression of will, and implied not only a lawmaker, but a law-enforcer; and in the same heaven-inspired light they read and constructed history. "All things are of God," was the motto they adopted; and just as God was first in nature, so was He first in providence. Men are but the instruments by which He works. The wicked are His sword. Now, to write history upon these principles requires one taught of the Spirit. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Well now, nowhere, even in the Bible, can you find a more striking illustration of the inspiration of selection than in the Gospel history. Here are four portraits of one person all different from one another, and yet the face is one. We are told the difficulty was the embarrassment occasioned by the superabundance of the materials. The task was to select the materials and construct a perfect Christ without redundancy and without defect; a Christ for their own age, a Christ for all ages, a Christ for the East, a Christ for the West, a Christ for the world, a Christ for the Church; a Christ shrouded in mystery, so that no mortal can fully comprehend Him, and

yet a Christ so simple that a child can understand Him well enough to love Him; a Christ so many-sided that from no single point of view can you see Him in all His completeness, and yet under whatever aspect you may look at Him, He shall be Jesus Christ the same for all men, all times, all places—Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. As to the testimony of Christ and His apostles to the writings said to be inspired, there are four interrogations to make. First, What did they mean by the "Scriptures"? What did the Bible Christ used contain? Secondly, Is their testimony that of perfectly competent authority? Did they know? Thirdly, Were they perfectly candid, outspoken, free from guile? Fourthly, What sort of testimony was it? Was it hesitating or emphatic? Was it qualified or unqualified?

First, What is the meaning of the term "Scriptures"? What were the books contained in the Bible used in Palestine in our Lord's day? the Bible He read and expounded, and lived by, and exhorted others to read and obey? Now, fortunately, we may come to a fairly satisfactory conclusion upon this subject. There are few matters of Biblical criticism upon which there is so large a consensus of opinion among Protestants as upon this. From the writings of Josephus and others, we may boldly assert that the Bible used by our Lord was the same as to its contents as the one in daily use among ourselves. Josephus was one of the most learned men the Jews ever had among them. His father was a priest, his mother a descendant of the Maccabean Kings. He was born A.D. 37. It is said that when Titus took Jerusalem, and carried away the vessels of the temple and the golden lamp-stand,

he gave Josephus the temple copy of the Holy Scriptures, so that there can be no doubt as to the correctness of his information. The famous passage in his writings, relating to the Old Testament Canon, reads thus: "We have not a countless number of books discordant and arrayed against each other, but only two-and-twenty, containing the history of every age, which are justly accredited as Divine. . . . The prophets who followed Moses have described the things which were done during the age of each one respectively, in thirteen books. The remaining four contain hymns to God, and rules of life for men. From the time of Artaxerxes, moreover, until our present period, all occurrences have been written down; but they are not regarded as entitled to the like credit with those which precede them, because there was no certain succession of prophets. Fact has shown what confidence we place in our own writings. For although so many ages have passed away, no one has dared to add to them or to take anything from them, or to make alterations. In all Jews it is implanted, even from their birth, to regard them as being the instructions of God, and to abide steadfastly by them, and if necessary, to die gladly for them." There are reckoned more than twenty-two books in our English Bibles. How did Josephus reckon so as to make the Hebrew Bible consist only of twenty-two? The answer is, some of the books we reckon separately he classed together—*e.g.*, there are the five books of Moses; Joshua, sixth; Judges and Ruth, seventh; First and Second of Samuel, eighth; First and Second of Kings, ninth; First and Second of Chronicles, tenth; Ezra and Nehemiah, eleventh; Esther, twelfth; Isaiah, thirteenth; Jeremiah and Lamentations, fourteenth; Ezekiel, fifteenth; Daniel, six-

teenth ; the Twelve Minor Prophets (reckoned as one), seventeenth ; Job, eighteenth ; Psalms, nineteenth ; Proverbs, twentieth ; Ecclesiastes, twenty-first ; and the Song of Solomon, twenty-second. Josephus reckons the Law, five books ; the Prophets (including the histories which were written, as it was believed, by prophets), thirteen ; and the Psalms (including maxims of life), four. Five, thirteen, and four make up the twenty-two ; and with this enumeration agree Sirachides and Philo ; and what is more, this is the triplex division which our Lord recognises when He speaks of the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. And this is the reckoning preserved in the Christian Church down to the time of Jerome. Full and satisfactory information upon this point may be obtained from Stewart and Alexander on the Canon, and from many other sources. According to Josephus, the Canon of the Old Testament was closed in the time of Ezra, and no additions were afterwards made to it. Ezra's Bible was the same as our Lord's Bible ; and our English Bible is the same as our Lord's. So far, then, all is plain sailing.

Secondly, Did Christ and His apostles know as much as we have assumed they knew of Bible criticism, and of the history of Biblical literature ? There is a sense in which it may be said that Christianity is the offspring of Judaism ; and though the parent died in giving the child birth, the hereditary traces are too obvious to be overlooked. The New Testament interprets the Old, and the Old is introductory to the New. They must stand or fall together. They are the Jachin and Boaz of the temple of sacred truth. They are the two leaves of the folding door by which we enter the sanctuary of revealed religion. The chief office of the Teacher sent from God was to keep

up the continuity of revelation, and taking it as it had been dropped by the hand of the last of the prophets four hundred years before, to carry it out to its completest consummation. It was the one province of the Founder of the latter Dispensation to set forth, in the clearest manner, the relation in which it stood to the former. He was super-saturated with both the letter and the spirit of the ancient writings. He quotes them constantly, and always with approbation. He refers by name to some of their most distinguished authors, such as Moses, Daniel, Isaiah, and David. He refers to many of the individuals whose biographies are sketched there, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and Jonah. He alludes to certain prominent events with the evident conviction that they were veritable history; for instance, to the Creation, the Flood, the lifting up by Moses of the serpent in the wilderness, to the preaching of Jonah, and to his being swallowed by the sea-monster; and bases His reasoning upon these assumed facts in such a manner that, if the foundation is not secure, the superstructure built thereon must fall in ruins. The Old Testament was the constant text-book of His teaching. He pays the utmost deference to its authority. With Him it is the last court of appeal. "It is written," was a phrase continually upon His lips. With this He quashed the suggestions of the devil. Upon it He discourses with friend and foe. With Him, "It is written" settles everything. More than this, these holy writings were not merely His study and the chief topics of His teaching, they were the rule of His life, the pabulum upon which His soul subsisted. As early as when He was only twelve years old, when His precocious knowledge

astonished His elders, even when thus young the consciousness awoke within Him that He was in a special sense the Son of God—that He was the subject of ancient prediction, and that His life was pre-ordained. And as He grew in wisdom, that conviction took deeper and deeper root, so that He felt it was His one business to fulfil—that is, to fill up and fill out—the Divine plan respecting Himself. Hence, He was ever remarking to His followers that He did this and that in order that it might be fulfilled which was spoken in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning Him. He censured, in no measured language, the traditions of His time, because He held they made void the commandments of God. His delight was to exhibit the spirit of the Law, and of the Prophets, and put a deeper meaning upon their words; but He never uttered a word against the Scriptures themselves. The instances in which He seemed to amend them admit of another explanation. While He taught others that the Scriptures could not be broken, He was too consistent to do that Himself. He told His followers to search them —that they testified of Him. He told the Pharisees, if they believed Moses they would believe Him; for Moses wrote of Him. He told the Sadducees they erred, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." His constant question was, "How readest thou?" "What is written in the Law?" "Have you not read?" "Did ye never read?" He claimed for the Scriptures the fullest inspiration. Some men hesitate to call them "the word of God;" but Christ called them that. He called them the commandments of God, not in a special but in a general sense. He asked, "Have you not read that which was

spoken to you by God?" He declares that David "spoke by the Spirit." Nothing can be more sweeping than His assertion, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass than for one tittle of the law to fail." Again, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." It is scarcely possible to carry one's notions of inspiration higher than that. After His resurrection, He spoke to His disciples these never-to-be-forgotten words: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me." Equally emphatic and unqualified is the testimony of the apostles to the plenary inspiration of the sacred writings. Indeed, holy men from God are sure to produce holy writings when they are moved by the Holy Ghost; and veracity is one of the lowest qualities of holiness. Dr. Pope observes: "Our Lord's witness to the inspiration of both Testaments is, to those who believe in Him, the sum of all evidence. As the Son of God incarnate, He re-utters the entire Old Testament as His own ancient oracles made new; they died in Him to their transitory meaning, and rose with Him to be the power of an endless life." In truth, He and His apostles have so endorsed the ancient Scriptures as to make themselves responsible for their perfect truthfulness, they have fully committed themselves, and there is no drawing back; and he who questions the authority of these inspired records, questions the authority of Christ Himself. In matters of authority, Moses, Christ, and Paul, are one; and for all three God the Holy Ghost must be held the surety. Is Christ Divine? Is His incarnation

a fact of history, which all the scepticism in the world is powerless to overthrow? If so, what is the contention? Can we ever have anything more immutable than the testimony of God? And yet some of His professed disciples are asking that this question may be settled—they complain of its being left undecided. They persist in talking and writing about the matter as if we were all at sea, without a rudder and without a chart. They sometimes so far betray their ignorance as to ask upon what ground the Bible is supposed to be inspired, till one is forced to think they never read the words of the Lord Jesus with anything like attention. The writers of the New Testament claim the fullest inspiration for the Old, and they claim the fullest inspiration for themselves. To every man who accepts the authority of Christ as worth anything, this matter is settled. He has settled it—or it must ever remain unsettled. No more evidence, no higher evidence, can be obtained. The case does not admit of it. Nor is this arguing in a circle. If the history of the incarnation be proved beyond dispute to be matter of authentic history, then it is as legitimate to deduce from that the infallibility of the Son of God as it is from authentic English history to deduce the nature of the British Constitution. Prove that Christ erred in judgment, that He was ignorant of such questions as the date and authorship and meaning of the sacred writings, and we shall not only be obliged to recast our theories of inspiration, but recast our theology from beginning to end; if, indeed, there will be anything worth calling theology to recast. Was it not said of Him, by the prophet, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and under-

standing, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord"? He declares of Himself, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him." "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." "As My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." The apostle testifies of Him, that "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" that He is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It must be so, else what becomes of His pre-existence? Was He the Angel Jehovah, not the angel of Jehovah, but the *Messenger* Jehovah, the *sent* Jehovah of the former Dispensation? Was He with the Church in the wilderness, and spake to Moses on Mount Sinai? Was it really Him the people tempted, and against Him the people murmured? "The good confession," which He witnessed before Pontius Pilate, was this: He said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." What truth? He answered, "Thy word is truth." Was it not "the Spirit of Christ" that was in the prophets "when they testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"? And surely the Spirit was cognisant of His own authorship? But it has been suggested that He emptied Himself of the knowledge pertaining to His Godhead, and retained only that pertaining to His manhood, so that He knew no more of Bible matters than any other pious ordinary Israelite of the age in which He lived. How was it, then, that He taught what no other man ever taught before or since? What did He mean by saying, "I am the Light of the world"? What availed His being a Teacher sent from

God, if He could teach no more than others could teach? He Who opened the understanding of others, could He not open His own? It was essential to Him that He should understand the past, in order that He should take His part in that grand religious development in which He was to be the central force and the most prominent figure. And therefore to argue that He so emptied Himself of that which was necessary to the mission He came to perform, is to say that He rendered Himself incapable of accomplishing it, and, of course, He failed. Perhaps the old question will be raised, How knew this man letters, having never learned? The answer is, God need not go to school. There is another suggestion, which, if accepted, would more effectually un-Christ Him, and that is that He knew better, but He accommodated Himself to the superstition and ignorance of the people, not willing to disturb or offend their prejudices. He knew full well Moses did not write the Pentateuch, but he spoke as if he had. He knew Jonah was a myth; but he argued from it as if real history. That is Mr. Gore's notion of the matter. But since *Lux Mundi* was first published, the editor has explained and withdrawn. He has climbed down, as we say, and he declares he did not intend to insinuate that our Lord was fallible, and we are bound to believe him. But Mr. Gore's mind seems to be in a mythical condition concerning myths. He demurely asks the question, which he intends should have the force of an assertion: "Are not its—*i.e.*, the Bible's—earliest narratives, before the call of Abraham, of the nature of myths, in which we cannot distinguish the historical germ, though we do not at all deny that it exists?" Again, he puts forth a

question, as is his wont: "For example, does His—*i.e.*, our Lord's—use of Jonah's resurrection as a type of His own depend in any real degree upon whether it is historical fact or allegory?" In plain English, was it quite honest on the part of our Lord, knowing, as He did, that Jonah was a myth, to refer to his preaching to the Ninevites, and to his being in the belly of the fish, and to use these as illustrations and arguments? Let us suppose a case. Here is a gentleman wishful to enter Parliament, and he becomes a candidate with a view to represent a certain district. He has a meeting of the electors, and pledges himself, if they will only send him, that he will at once remove some of those anomalies of which there are loud complaints. He pledges himself to do his best to abolish those pensions paid for doing the duties of offices that have long become extinct, and which hitherto no Government has honestly attempted to deal with. "Send me," he urges, "and I give you a solemn promise that, as Hercules cleansed the Augean stables, so I will sweep away these abuses." They send him. Twelve months pass away, and his voice is not heard in the House at all; at the end of this period he appears before his constituents. They reproach him for breach of faith. "I beg you to recall my words," he says. "I promised you that just as Hercules performed a certain feat of labour, so I would set myself to accomplish a certain task. Now, Hercules was a myth. He never existed, and therefore, of course, never performed what he was said to perform; and I have kept my word to you by doing as he did, that is, never doing it at all." Now, would not these electors feel they were duped? Would they not say, "Though in a sense he had kept his promise

to their ear, he broke it to their hope"? Would such conduct as that appear honest and honourable? If Jonah was a myth or allegory, were the Queen of the South and Solomon myths as well? If the narrative of Jonah being three days and three nights in the whale's belly was all a fable, what proof could it be of the resurrection? Again, if Jonah was a myth, so, of course, was his mission to Nineveh; and by treating history after that sort we might reduce it all to myth and fable. Moreover, the notion that Christ pandered to the prejudices of the people is contradicted by every act of His life, and every word of His lips. That is just what He did *not* do. Luther, and Calvin, and Knox did not denounce Popery more vehemently than Christ denounced the customs and doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In truth, He died a martyr to His faithful opposition to the current religious sentiments and practice of His times. These are some of the wounds inflicted by the hands of His professed friends, while some of His supposed enemies have given to the world a very different estimate of His moral perfections and of His Divinity. To quote Dr. Farrar, Spinoza spoke of Him as "the truest symbol of heavenly wisdom." The beauty and grandeur of His life and character overawed even the flippant soul of Voltaire. Napoleon said, "Between Him and whoever else in the world, there is no possible term of comparison." "He is," says Strauss, cold-blooded sceptic as he was, "the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion, the being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible." Borowski rashly placed too near each other the name of Christ and the name of Kant. Kant nobly said, "The one name is holy, the other is that of a poor bungler doing his

best to interpret Him." "The Christ of the Gospel," said Renan, "is the most beautiful incarnation of God, in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal, and His reign will never end." And he thus apostrophised Him: "Repose now in Thy glory, noble initiator! Thy work is achieved, Thy Divinity established. Between Thee and God distinction shall be made no more." Mill spoke of Him as of a man "charged with a special, express, and unique mission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue."

To summarise this part of the argument; there is no room for doubt as to what was comprised in those Scriptures to which Christ and His apostles bore their testimony. They were the same as our Old Testament contains. It is clear, also, they had an exact and comprehensive knowledge of the subject. As to their integrity, no sceptic who values his reputation would cast an aspersion upon their character; and certainly the testimony was as explicit and emphatic as words can make it, and every loyal disciple will accept this as conclusive. Christ and His apostles, without controversy, believed in the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament, and no man worthy of the name of Christian will fear to come into the fellowship of such a faith. Upon this foundation, which God has laid in Zion, let us take up our everlasting rest. One is getting rather weary of hearing about—

> "An infant crying in the night,
> An infant crying for the light,
> And with no language but a cry."

The sun is up, it is broad day. The light has come long centuries ago. But if the infants will be perverse, and put their heads under the bedclothes, and cry in their self-

created darkness, they ought to be chastised for disturbing the contented tranquillity of the rest of the household. We have met somewhere with this quotation from Aristotle: "The cause of the difficulty of seeing lies not in the thing, but in ourselves; for as the eyes of the bat to daylight, so is the human mind to objects which, in their own nature, are the clearest of all." And let it be borne in mind, Christ and His apostles gave testimony to the whole of the Old Testament; without exception, and without distinction. Every book of the Old Testament is quoted in the New, except Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, the Song of Solomon, Nahum, and Obadiah. This is not arguing that every part of the Bible is equally instructive, or equally nourishing to our soul's life. The Bible is an organic whole, and every part is vital. As it has been said, the hair and the nails of a human being are really as much a part of his organism as his brains or his heart; but they are certainly not as useful. Then is the Book of Esther inspired, in which the name of God does not occur? Was it a part of those Scriptures, across the whole of which the Son of God wrote His indelible endorsement? If so, then on His authority we are bound to accept it. And is the Song of Solomon entitled to the same honour? Yes; and for the self-same reason. Dr. Pye Smith, that master of Israel, stood out against this obstinately for a great while, till fully convinced that it was in the Bible that Christ had imprinted His imperial seal, and then he humbly and heartily accepted, believing the design of the book to be the celebration of pure conjugal affection between one husband and one wife, and thus teaching a lesson that was not unworthy one of the books of the sacred Canon to teach. An inspi-

ration in fragments and patches would require, on our part, an inspiration to select and piece it together, and could only result in the most hopeless bewilderment. The Bible, as bearing witness to itself, makes no distinction between any of its parts, or between one writer and another, no matter what the subject, or what the occasion, or what the period of its composition. It knows nothing of the nine degrees of inspiration mentioned by Maimonides. It lays so little stress upon the individuality of its writers, that the authors of considerable portions of it are not known. Everything, whether historical, or devotional, or political, is declared to be written either by God's suggestion or under God's direction. The title it gives itself is, "The law of the Lord;" "The word of the Lord;" "The testimony, the statutes, the oracles of God;" "The law of Moses, which God commanded him to write." The words of our Lord as to the inspiration of every part are most emphatic: "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled;" and by "the law" Christ and His apostles often meant the entire body of the sacred writings. The well-known text in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy has been the occasion of much controversy. The Authorised Version is, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," etc. The Revised renders it, "Every Scripture inspired of God is," etc.; but between "all," meaning the whole, and "every," meaning every particular part, there is not much difference. It would be difficult to quote an authority higher than that of Bishop Ellicott upon any subject of New Testament exegesis, and he says the apostle's declaration "enunciates the vital truth that

every separate portion of the Holy Book is inspired, and forms a living portion of a living organic whole."

Turning from the Old Testament to the New, the claims to supernatural aid are not a whit less strong. They are, if possible, stronger. On a former page were quoted Christ's lofty claims to His own direct intercommunion with the Father, and He makes no distinction between Himself and His apostles. His words are, "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me." "He that receiveth you receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." He told His followers that they would be arrested and brought before the legal authorities; but they were to take no thought how or what they should speak, "For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you;" and this assurance doubtless applied to every occasion when they should be called upon to witness to Christ, and to Christ's truth. His promise to them was, "I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter;" and, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." Now, were these assurances and promises ever fulfilled? To whom were they fulfilled, if not to the writers of the New Testament? The claims to inspiration on the part of these New Testament writers are as high as they well can be. "In every one of his epistles," says Mr. White, in the Clerical Symposium on

Inspiration, "St. Paul distinctly and emphatically claims to speak in the name of the risen Christ. A full induction of every phrase in his writings asserting or implying such inspiration of God would require an abstract of half his writings. The whole Second Epistle to the Corinthians is an elaborate and unflinching assertion of those claims." In the First Epistle to the same Church, the writer's words are sufficiently startling. He says, "We have the mind of Christ;" "We have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." To the Galatians he writes, "But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." He could hardly use stronger words than these. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." To the Thessalonians he wrote, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God." Peter classes Paul's writings with "the other Scriptures." The Canon of the New Testament was closed before the end of the first century, and it ought to be sufficient to satisfy the most exacting, that the critical sagacity of the Church for eighteen hundred years has never yet discovered a single writing of those early times omitted that ought to be accepted; nor, on the other hand, has the Church in all

her branches during all these generations seen sufficient reason to exclude a single book she once accepted. In truth, supposing that Mark's Gospel was indited by St. Peter, and that the Epistle to the Hebrews is of apostolic authorship, the whole of the New Testament is composed by apostles, except the writings of St. Luke, and he was the intimate friend and companion of St. Paul, and he had almost certainly written his Gospel some few years before Paul suffered martyrdom, so that without doubt Paul read it and approved it. Indeed, if all things are taken into account, it becomes as certain that God is virtually the Author of the Scriptures as it is that God made the world.

CHAPTER V.

THE HUMAN ASPECT OF THE QUESTION.

HITHERTO we have looked mainly at the Divine side of the subject. Let us now turn attention to the human side. The Bible is at once the word of God and the word of man. Dr. Westcott wisely observes, "The Bible is authoritative, for it is the word of God; it is intelligible, for it is the word of man." It is the most human book on earth, and we need a human Bible just as much as we want a human Christ. It is because it is so purely human that it has satisfied the soul-hunger of millions. No matter how desolate, how unutterably sad, how perplexed, how crushed with a sense of guilt, how ablaze with desire, how rapturous and ecstatic the human soul; no matter what its moods, what its resolves, what its aspirations, there is a something in these God-breathed writings that fully and promptly responds to it. There are parts of the book of such a nature that you can hardly discern the hand of man at all in its composition, and there are other parts in which you can scarcely trace the finger of God. What more perfectly human and homely than the Book of Proverbs? All nations have their proverbs. They are the essence of practical wisdom; they are a part of the intellectual wealth of every civilised community. They constitute the small change of the commerce of life. Why claim inspira-

tion for them? All truth is truth. Yes, and all gold is gold; but only that which is minted, and bears the image and superscription of the sovereign, is of sterling value. Man may have originated them, but God directed them to be written, because He saw how useful they might be in the education of His creatures; and because God's stamp has been put upon them, they are of special importance. His endorsement changes the secular into the sacred. Then, again, there is the Book of Ecclesiastes, of which some think so meanly. The Bible would be incomplete without that, because it gives us a phase of experience hardly given anywhere else. It gives us the night side of life. We have here the experience of one satiated with the world, all the pleasures of which have proved apples of Sodom, and turned to ashes in his mouth. It is like the experience of one upon a raft at sea. All his fresh water is exhausted, and so in his tormenting thirst he has drunk the salt water, till his thirst becomes fever, and his fever delirium. This phase of experience is, alas! all too common. There are plenty of people whose jaded appetites respond to no stimulant, however pungent; and, like the ancient Roman, they are ready to offer a handsome premium to any one who will invent a new enjoyment. There are men and women like the writer of this book: rich, bloated, cloyed, so filled with nausea from the surfeit of things earthly, that they turn away with loathing from the things of heaven. Should not there be something in the word of God for these? The condition of these lineal descendants of the Dives of the Gospel, pampered, replete, overfed strangers to true happiness, is, after all, one of abject poverty: that of Lazarus lying at the gate, covered with sores, the pariah

dogs his ministers of comfort, subsisting upon the crumbs and crusts of charity, is opulent and princely in comparison. And yet these wretched people, because they are so wretched, are objects of the Great Father's compassion; and so on their behalf the preacher preached his sermon, and the gracious Spirit hoped by putting this experience upon the enduring record, in the lesson book of the world, to attract the attention of these wealthy outcasts, to the moral at the close: "Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man,"—the whole duty of man to himself, as well as his duty towards God. Then, again, there is the Book of Psalms, the hymn book of the Jewish Temple as well as of the Christian Church, to which neither Christ nor His apostles added a single lyric; doubtless, because they deemed it perfect and entire, wanting nothing. How exquisitely human! There lies its charm. These Psalms speak in the vernacular of the human soul, in all its endless diversity of frames and feelings. You may hear something like these threnodies of regret, these wailings of contrition, these confessions of failures and sins, these yearnings after God, these sunlit bursts of gladness expressive of the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is covered, these full assurances of faith and full assurances of hope which speak out their contentment in such words as these: "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness": in the old-fashioned Methodist Class Meeting still; for religious experience is the chief material out of which Psalms have always been manufactured. In these Bible Psalms the Holy Spirit glorifies His own work done in human souls,

and He is doing that work as effectually to-day as ever, for to vital religion these words apply, "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end." And yet, again, there is the Book of Esther, which impulsive Luther is said to have flung into the Elbe, though this is contradicted; and it is said it was the Book of Esdras, one of the Apocryphal books, he treated after this fashion. But he did say he wished Esther had never been written, for "there was too much of Judaism in it, and a great deal of heathen naughtiness." It was this same Luther, be it remembered, who called the Epistle of James an epistle of straw, because it did not suit his doctrinal one-sidedness: which should teach us a lesson of caution as to how we make reason, or conscience, or the inner light a standard by which to measure God's truth; and it should make us at the same time thankful that "no prophecy is of private interpretation;" for if it had been so, the Higher Criticism by this time would have emptied the Canon, and there would be hardly a verse of Scripture left. Some good men reluctantly accept the Book of Esther now, but we must remember that Christ and His apostles accepted it, and so it is not for us to demur. The late Dean Stanley, whose *Doxy* could not be described as "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd," writes thus: "The name of God is not there, but the work of God is. The quarrel of Ahasuerus, the sleepless night, the delaying of the lot, worked out according to the Divine will as completely as the parting of the Red Sea or the thunders of Sinai." Nothing is more curious than the fate of books, even sacred books. Late as was the introduction of Esther into the Canon, it mounted up at once, if not to the first rank (that was reserved for the five books of Moses)

—yet first among the second, more precious than Prophets or Proverbs or Psalms. Amongst the five Hagiographical rolls it was emphatically *the* roll; and this book, so highly honoured by the Jewish Church, has been accorded barely a welcome in the Christian Church.

There is then a divine and human element in the Holy Scriptures. Sometimes one is more prominent, and sometimes the other; but neither of them is ever absent. The analogy between the twofold nature of the word of God and the twofold nature of the Son of God was early pointed out; and, with respect to both these facts, there have been analogous heresies. In early times there was a sect of heretics who denied the Humanity of our Lord, and argued that His body was not real, but merely an apparition or phantom; and there have been others that denied His Divinity. Well now, there have been those that denied the human element in the word. The writers were pens, not penmen. It was said their consciousness fell away, and God used them merely as a machine. Then, on the other side, the human element has been so exaggerated as to leave but little room for the Divine. Now, these are the extremes to be avoided. The truth, as usual, lies about midway between. Another feature of similarity may be traced here, that, just as in the case of the God-man each of His two natures is spoken of indiscriminately, and sometimes He speaks of Himself as the Son of Man and sometimes as the Son of God, so the Bible speaks of itself as the word of Moses, or the word of this prophet and of that; and at the same time it speaks of itself as the word, the command, the testimony of God. In the same breath we are told that David himself spoke, and that the

Lord spoke by the mouth of David. It is curious also to note that, as in the New Testament the two names of our Saviour, Jesus and Christ, are employed now one, now the other, and frequently both together, without any rule or apparent order, so in the Old Testament the two commonest names of the Supreme Being, Jehovah and Elohim —the one, after the habit of the Septuagint, generally translated Lord, the other God—are used indifferently, and very often both together. Dr. Harold Browne supplies the following observation in *Aids to Faith:* "In the oldest Psalms the word Jehovah abounds. In the Book of Proverbs, only Jehovah. In Ecclesiastes, only Elohim or God. In Job, God in all the poetry; Jehovah in all the prose. In the ninth chapter of Daniel, Jehovah occurs nine times, and only in that chapter." A great deal has been made of the use of these names. It has been attempted to establish a theory to the effect that the use of these words indicates separate writers and separate documents, from which almost all the historical portions of Scripture have been compiled. But this is hard to believe, seeing that frequently in the same sentence we find both words. For instance, "Jehovah appeared to Solomon, and God said." When Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, they said: "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel." The writer of the Book of Chronicles often substitutes the word Elohim, or God, for Jehovah in the extracts he makes from Samuel and the Kings. Perhaps the best account that can be given of the employment of these sacred names is that supported by some of the best critics, viz., that Elohim sets forth the Divine Being as the putter-forth of force, the seat of power; while Jehovah represents Him to us as the God of

the Covenant, the Author of grace, the Maker and Fulfiller of the promises. At any rate, it is difficult to believe that these words indicate different authors and different writing, seeing that in one single sentence they both sometimes occur, as in the instances already given; and here is another, "Jehovah visited Sarah as He had said, and Sarah said, Elohim hath made me to laugh;" and again, "Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the eternal El-God." Again, it is said, "Elohim will provide," but the name of the place distinguished by this transaction was Jehovah-jireh, which means, "Jehovah will provide" (Gen. xxii. 8, 14). Now, can it be believed that the writers of the historical portions of the Bible, having different documents before them, wrote part from one document and part from another, to help them to form a single sentence, and that a very brief one? and can it be credited that criticism can be ground up to so fine an edge as to be able to split such a hair? The analogy between the Eternal Personal Word and the written word suggests another fact. The two natures in the one person of the God-man, and the two elements in the inspired word, cannot in either case be divided without destroying both. A purely Divine Christ could be no Saviour for man. He could not have lived to set him an example. He could not have died to make atonement for his transgressions; and if He could not have died, He could not have risen from the dead; and in that case the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Sanctifier, the Lord and Giver of life, could not have been sent. We should have had no one to make intercession for us. He could have given no pledge of our resurrection; and the Christian religion, lacking the evidence supplied by the

resurrection, would have lacked one of the basal facts upon which the whole superstructure depends.

But another consequence follows if this analogy holds good. The human nature of Christ was beset with all the weakness and infirmities incident to our common humanity. "The Word was made flesh," "born of a woman, born under the law," born under natural law as well as moral. God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," like it in everything except its sinfulness. He "was without sin." He "did no sin." And so with the human element in the written word. It is beset with all the ordinary infirmities of human compositions, sinful error and untruth excepted. The Divine nature in Christ preserved the human from sin; the Divine agency in writing the Scriptures preserves the human from mistakes and falsehood. "Inspiration carries infallibility, *especially*," a great authority amongst us says, "in matters of religion." He does not mean by that "especially" to make the concession that there are errors relating to other things than religion. Before error or untruth could be charged home upon the Scriptures the autograph copies must be resuscitated, because the supposed error may be the error of the copyist. Before error can be charged home upon a Scripture writer it must be ascertained whether he makes the statement himself, or whether he is simply reporting. No historical difficulty has occasioned more trouble than the account Stephen gives in the 16th verse of the seventh chapter of Acts; but, as Dr. Whitby observes in the Introduction to his Commentary on the New Testament, "supposing it to be an error, Luke is not chargeable with it. The error is Stephen's. Luke is simply reporting it." The Jewish

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fathers hesitated to admit Ezekiel into the Canon, because they said he contradicted the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch declares that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, and Ezekiel said He did not; and there is a sense beyond question whereby, according to the present constitution of things, the sin of the father entails suffering upon the children, and there is another sense in which every man must give account of himself to God. So that both are right. It has been a thousand times contended that James and Paul contradict each other. Luther thought so at one time, though he lived to see his mistake; and hence he would have thrown the Epistle of James into the fire. But as soon as Paul and James are understood, it is discovered there is not the slightest contradiction. "Discrepancy," said Dr. Samuel Davidson, "is only another word for ignorance." Still, although we wait for the demonstration of errors in the Holy Scriptures before we concede there are such, yet beyond question there are infirmities and defects in the Bible, as it has come down to us. In the nature of things it must be so. The finite mind of the creature, be he angel or man, cannot fully grasp the mind of the Infinite. No mirror could reflect all the rays of the sun. It is true of every man, as of the prophet and his people, as true now as then, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." At the very first stage the revelation is defective, in the sense that it is partial. Then human language is defective as an instrument of thought; especially is this so when we endeavour to set forth the things of heaven in the words of earth. Moreover, translations are defective. Copyists,

be they writers or printers, are liable to mistakes. Marginal notes have crept into the text, and interpolations have been detected. Dr. A. Clarke, in his Introduction to his Commentary, remarks, "The Massorites, the most extensive of Jewish commentators, invented the vowel points and accents of the Hebrew, as it has come down to us, and these give the words a meaning which in their simple state they by no means bear; and there is not one word in the Hebrew Bible that does not come under Massoritic influence." The Jews have been suspected of corrupting the sacred text in, at least, four different places. It is certainly a significant fact that the earliest translation in many portions differs seriously from the original, as we have it. Whether it is because the text they translated from differed from the text of to-day, or whether some portions were construed better than others, it is not always easy to determine. And in this there is nothing surprising, when we remember the earliest portions of the Bible were committed to writing by Moses some fifteen hundred years before the coming of Christ, and that probably portions of an older Bible had been handed down to Moses, perhaps in some other tongue. Almost twenty centuries have elapsed since Christ was born, and Moses began to write the present Scriptures fifteen hundred years before that, and probably traditions or documents reached him two thousand five hundred years old, so that we are carried back in the world's history for some six thousand years. Take the period since the Bible, as in some sort we have it, began to be written, and we are taken back for thirty-five centuries. Bearing this in mind, we shall not be startled to be told of thousands of different readings in the some-

thing like two thousand Hebrew manuscripts. The marvel is that they have reached us in any readable form at all. "Macbeth" was published in 1623, that is, about 270 years ago; and Howard Staunton, one of Shakespeare's editors, declares "there are probably not *thirty* consecutive lines throughout which have come down to us as the poet wrote them." Nothing but the providence of God could have preserved the sacred Scriptures in such a state of purity; for, notwithstanding the various readings, we are assured that no doctrine is affected, and the general truth of the history is not impaired. Let it be said, with all the emphasis that it can be said, RELATIVELY the Bible is perfect. What is relative perfection? Perfect with reference to the purpose it has to accomplish, and that is the salvation of man. Absolute perfection belongs to none but God. Imperfection is inherent in whatsoever pertains to man. The Bible is perfect as a directory of a holy life, as a guide in the way to heaven. There are slight blemishes, just as there are spots on the sun; but, for all practical purposes, the sun is as good with spots as without them. Unfortunately, multitudes of people fasten upon the defects arising from the part man has taken in writing and transmitting the word of life, while they shut their eyes and ears to its excellences. And though there is no stronger evidence of a bad heart; though nothing on earth is more demoralising and devil-like than to ransack the Bible from end to end to find out its blemishes, yet we are afraid there are some depraved enough to indulge in this occupation. Such a spirit as that utterly disqualifies a man from being a learner, much less a teacher or a critic. To the jaundiced eye, the purest snow is yellow. And here is another fault,

much more innocent, but extremely mischievous. Multitudes of people concoct some theory of inspiration, and because the Bible refuses to be squeezed into the size and shape of their conjecture, they henceforth declare the Bible is not inspired. Let it never be forgotten, the writers of the Bible were men, not deities. As Grotius remarks, "When God makes the prophet, He does not unmake the man." Those inspired men sometimes talked as they would not have done if the Spirit of the Lord had not been in them, and sometimes they talked just as they would have done if they had known nothing of the Spirit whatever. They were influenced by their surroundings and their times. There is a local colouring, not only about Paul's epistles, but about almost all parts of the Scriptures. The individuality was not crushed out of them, but rather the probability is that they were selected of God for this special office because of their personal idiosyncrasies. Paul's reasoning, it is said, was after the manner of the Rabbis, and not according to the method of Aristotle, or Aldrich, or Whately. Of course! Why not? God likely enough sent him to the school of Gamaliel on purpose, and the Holy Ghost converted him and qualified him to be a champion of Gospel truth, because He wished that Gospel truth should be presented just as He knew Paul would present it.

Exceptions have been taken against the earlier portions of the Bible, because of the anthropomorphisms obtaining there. Anthropomorphisms is an uncouth word to English eyes and ears. It refers to those descriptions of the Deity which give Him the appearance of a human being. When Dr. Arnold wrote his Roman History, he

wrote the earlier portions in the simple child-like style of the early legends—his manner becoming more robust and manly as he proceeded; and he earned for himself hearty commendation, but in doing this he had the good taste to adopt the Bible method. The earliest portions of the Scriptures were the nursery literature, adapted to the infancy of the race. It is history suited to children, not indeed myths of Jack the Giant-killer class: "Of which," according to the editor of *Lux Mundi*, "we cannot distinguish the historical germ, though we do not at all deny that it exists." Nothing proves more forcefully the tender thoughtfulness of the Great Father than His condescension to human weakness, by thus accommodating the lesson to the capacity of the pupil. And another evidence of this is seen in the progressive character of the revelation. Of the principle of gradual development, we have a striking illustration in the promises and prophecies respecting the Messiah. And there is no branch of sacred science that affords a more delightful study than to trace the development of this Messianic idea, as it grows and expands and unfolds from generation to generation till the ideal becomes the real, and the abstract the concrete; and in the fulness of the times the Christ, the incomparable, the wonderful, was born. At first, this hope of a great moral Deliverer was general and vague. Then it became the special heritage of Abraham's descendants. In later times it became intensified. It was in the air. It haunted like a celestial apparition the chambers of their kings, and it shone like a miniature Shechinah in the hovels of the poor. It was the burden of the prophets, the hope of every wedded maiden; the bitterest dreg in the cup of the dying was

this, that he should not see the Lord's Christ. It was a national inspiration. It nerved the warrior for battle; and it breathed the breath of a strange life into their poetry, so that the Bible bards attained to a sublimity that no earth-born master of song could even imitate. If there is any thing that lives and throbs in those old oracles, it is the hope of a better future. All along their protracted and chequered history this heaven-inspired hope stood like a lighthouse, with its revolving light, upon the forelands of their fortune, sometimes waning till it was hardly visible, and sometimes flashing out suddenly upon the murky midnight with a brilliancy that was almost blinding. The same principle of development is traceable in Christian times. Peter, one of the earliest disciples, the head of the Apostolic College, the preacher of the Pentecostal sermon, filled as he was with the Holy Ghost, nine or ten years after the outpouring of the Spirit, needed a double miracle to convince him that the Gentiles might directly become Christians without being circumcised, and first made Jews, by way of preparation.

Another thing observable is that the Bible is adapted to man in a state of probation, so that though there is everything necessary to our faith, there is very little to gratify our fancy. There is sufficient to satisfy reason when she is reasonable; but there is plenty of the enigmatical to test and exercise our faith. Some, again, have been offended because it takes note of matters commonplace and insignificant. Paul writes about the cloak he left at Troas, and the books which he wished to have in his possession; and they have asked, Are these fit subjects of inspiration? To the first, Coleridge shall reply in the last of his letters

entitled *The Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.* He supposes some "captious litigator" laying hold of such a text as this, and asking, "Of what spiritual use is this?" "The answer is ready. It proves to us that nothing can be so trifling as not to supply an evil heart with a pretext for unbelief." The other, as to the books, Francis Newman shall answer. He says he had a friend of apostolic zeal and piety who had spent a fortune and spent himself in the determination to imitate his Divine Master; and one day Newman objected to this good man that some parts of the Bible were not profitable for "instruction in righteousness." Asked to specify an instance, he quoted this. To his discomfort and surprise, his friend replied: "That verse, at any rate, I should not like to dispense with. It was that verse that prevented me selling my library." "Useful," "profitable," how these words are misunderstood and abused! Some one asked Franklin one day, "What was the use of a baby?" "May be he will grow into a man some day," was the answer. Look into God's works, as well as into His word, and are there not plenty of things deemed useless there? What are the things you call *weeds* but plants, the use of which has not been discovered? No doubt, many a poor, restless, worried Indian missionary, without intending to impeach the wisdom of his Creator, has often asked the question, "What is the use of the mosquito?" What is the use of a rose? Why did not God make the poppy drab? What is the use of a butterfly, or a rainbow, or the stars for the matter of that? the little light they give does not justify the large amount of space they occupy. One of the wisest sayings of Victor Hugo is, "The

beautiful is as useful as the useful, perhaps more." But to return to the subject. Is health a sacred gift from heaven, the care of which becomes a duty? Is the body a temple of the Holy Ghost, an habitation of God through the Spirit, and therefore it becomes us to guard the sacred shrine? Are we taught by the Teacher sent from God to pray, "Give us day by day our daily bread"? Then why object that the Holy Spirit should be thought to move the aged apostle to ask that his warm travelling garment might be sent him to give him comfort, perhaps to preserve his life during the winter he would have to spend in the dark and chilly dungeon? And as to the books. Again we ask, Are we "divinely taught" to pray, "Give us this day our daily food for the body?" Then why should not the apostle be divinely moved to ask for the living bread for his soul? Trifles! Life is made up of trifles. If it be so that God numbers our hairs, then nothing pertaining to our welfare is a matter of indifference to Him. But they were "unlearned and ignorant men." So said their contemporaries; but they did not always confine themselves to the truth. Now, let it be said, and said dogmatically, these old Scripture writers had quite as great a knowledge of matters outside religion as their ancient and modern detractors. If it could have been so that they would have made as bad a use of learning as, alas! too many do, it was well they had none; for had that been the case, the world by this time would have been beyond redemption. It is said that their astronomy was at fault. They thought the earth was flat. Where is that said? It is certain they spoke of "the *round* world, and they that dwell therein." But they said the earth was fixed, and

could not be moved. Dr. M'Caul, Professor of Hebrew in King's College, London, in *Aids to Faith*, contends that the original means that it—that is, the earth—should not totter or fall. Consult your Hebrew Lexicon under the word Mót, and you will find his view corroborated. But the Scriptures speak of the sun rising and going down. So did Sir Isaac Newton, and so does the Astronomer Royal to-day, and so do all English-speaking people. Shall some one a thousand years hence write a book to prove that we of this nineteenth century knew no better than that the sun went round the earth, because we speak of the sun rising and going down? In the Book of Job the Lord is said to spread "the north over the empty places, and hang the earth upon nothing," which is a correct idea of a sublime fact. Well might Bacon observe of the Book of Job, that it is "pregnant and swelling with natural philosophy." Hipparchus, the first and greatest Grecian astronomer, computed the number of the stars to be 1022. The Bible speaks of them as innumerable as the sand upon the sea-shore, though not more than 1500 could be discerned by the unaided vision from any hill-top in Palestine. We of to-day know the stars to amount to hundreds of millions. Surely this counts one for the science of the Bible. Lieut. Maury, one of the first scientists of the age, and as devout of heart as he was vigorous of mind, in that book of his called *The Physical Geography of the Sea*, than which the inductive method has hardly produced a better illustration during the nineteenth century, in an elaborate chapter upon "The Atmosphere," thus writes: "And as for the general system of atmospherical circulation, which I have been so long endeavouring to describe, the Bible tells it all

in a single sentence, 'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.'" The same subject has been ably elucidated by Dore, in his *Law of the Rotation of the Winds.* Solomon refers to another scientific fact. He says: "All rivers run into the sea; and yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again." It is by this marvellous water-circulation that the earth is covered with verdure and beauty, and made the abode of life. Of all God's wonderful works there is nothing more wonderful than the method He adopts for watering the world; and here again we may quote the Book of Job: "He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them." One of the most interesting discoveries of modern times was Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood; but that discovery was at least implied in a statement of Holy Scripture, made thousands of years before Harvey saw the light: "The blood is the life;" and this statement may be found in that most wonderful of all books, the Book of Genesis, which some men say is mythical and unscientific. In that same book, whose wealth of wisdom will never be exhausted, we also read: "And God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters,"—that is, between the two oceans, the ocean above the expanse and the other beneath it,—"and let it divide the waters from the waters. And it was so," and is so, and here is another marvel. The yielding air, through which a feather sinks, supports a substance eight hundred times as heavy as itself—a weight to crush a mountain, a weight of tons that figures could hardly

represent, a sea of water which, if it should be suddenly let fall, would drown and destroy all things like the Deluge. And is not this in harmony with the latest findings of science? If this is fiction, where is fact?

One of the latest discoveries in physiology, worthy to take rank with that of the circulation of the blood, is that of the cause of animal heat. This addition to our knowledge was made by Baron Liebig. He tells us, in the animal body, the food is the fuel from which, with a proper supply of oxygen, we obtain the heat given out during its oxidation or combustion. But when food fails, "the substance of the organs themselves, the fat of the body, the substance of the muscles, the nerves and the brain, are unavoidably consumed," and that by combustion. Thus, persons dying of famine are literally "burnt with hunger." Professor Given directs attention to Deut. xxxii. 24, in the Authorised Version, "burnt with hunger," and to the Lamentations of Jeremiah v. 10, "Our skin was black like an oven," *i.e.*, blackened by the fire, "because of the terrible famine." This rendering is supported by high authorities, though the Revised Version translates the passage, "Wasted with hunger, and devoured with burning heat." Now, no one would argue that Moses understood organic chemistry as well as Liebig. No; but in the words of Oetinger, as quoted by Delitzsch, "We may believe that the Holy Spirit spake this by Moses, that what in subsequent times was discovered as to these matters might be found under these words." Returning once more to the Book of Job, we meet with these words (Job xxviii. 25), "To make a weight for the winds" or "the air." From this passage, Professor Given argues that the Spirit here indicates that

the air has weight, a fact discovered in the seventeenth century by Torricelli. And a very astounding fact it is, the discovery of which conducted to many other important discoveries. This weight is about 15 lbs. to the square inch, and it is almost past belief that a man of average size should be walking, leaping, running with a burden of 15 tons upon his shoulders. Tell this to an illiterate peasant, and he will be as incredulous as some philosophers when you tell them about miracles.

CHAPTER VI.

LIMITATIONS.

Continuing our researches into the inspired record, with a view to ascertain all we can get to know of the human instrument and the human element in the sacred writings, we come upon the following facts:—

1. The subjects of inspiration were not thereby made omniscient. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part," said one of the most distinguished of them all. No doubt any of them would have made a confession similar to Balaam: "I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of my own mind; but what the Lord saith, that will I speak." The characteristic of the Bible is that it is a self-revelation of God, and of His operations in providence and grace. Its direct object is religious; all the rest is incidental. The whole is covered by St. Paul's, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;" and by St. John's, "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through His name." Still, all idea of a partial inspiration is inadmissible. It is impossible to separate its doctrines from its history. The two are joined together as body and soul. One illustration will suffice. "For

as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Scores of similar instances might be adduced.

2. Inspiration, like the power to work miracles, was an extraordinary gift, and was never ordinary even to the greatest apostle or prophet. It was occasional. We know of only *One* upon Whom the Spirit was bestowed without measure, and upon Whom He did always abide. Clearly Peter was not inspired when he denied his Lord, nor when he dissembled at Antioch. Nor was Paul when he had that sharp contention with Barnabas concerning Mark. James and John were not inspired when they asked for fire to come down upon the Samaritan village, for which their Master rebuked them, and told them they knew not what spirit they were of. But John was inspired when the Divine afflatus came upon him, and he was, as he tells us, "in the Spirit on the Lord's day." David consults Nathan as to whether he shall build a house for the Lord; and Nathan, uninspired, answers, "Do all that is in thy heart, for God is with thee;" but Nathan, taught of God, the next morning reversed this counsel. Paul essayed to go unto Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered him not. Of Jeremiah we are expressly told that he received no revelations before the thirteenth year of King Josiah; and we are told, in almost as express terms, that such revelations ceased to be made to him after the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah. We have read somewhere, but cannot recall where, a tradition to the effect that St. John fasted and prayed, and sought by special intercession the inspiration of the Holy Ghost before writing his epistles, and would not put pen to parchment till he was conscious the endowment of the Spirit had been vouchsafed. Again and

again, more times than we need to specify, the prophets tell you the Spirit of the Lord came to them, the hand of the Lord was on them, implying that the Spirit also departed from them, and, like Samson, they became weak as other men. When the son of the woman of Shunem was smitten with sunstroke, she came to the prophet, and he said, "The Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." The people came to Jeremiah, and he interceded with God for a revelation of His will: "And it came to pass, after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah." Paul observed, "I go up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." This, we think, sufficiently demonstrates that inspiration was a special gift for a special purpose.

3. Inspiration is not always a guarantee of character. God has always reserved to Himself the right to send by whom He would send. Bad men have been inspired. For example, Caiaphas. Saul and his attendants prophesied. Balaam took up a false position, and yet he is a clear instance of a man used as the spokesman of God. Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, tried to dissuade Josiah, king of Judah, from engaging him in battle; but he would not hearken to "the words of Necho from the mouth of God," and was consequently slain.

4. The study of the phenomenon of inspiration brings out another fact, viz., the prophets did not always understand the visions they saw, nor even the words they spoke and wrote. St. Peter tells us, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the

sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Daniel informs us that the angel Gabriel was sent to explain to him the visions that he saw, for that he himself had no insight into their meaning. Ezekiel seems to intimate that he was almost as much perplexed as his hearers to understand his own parabolic utterances. Peter did not understand the vision he beheld in the trance at Joppa until it was interpreted to him. The seer of Patmos confesses that he could not interpret the meaning of the scenes that passed before his astonished sight until he received an explanation in addition to that which the vision suggested, and this only extended to a portion of what he saw. The rest he seemed to have little or no clue to, so that it is scarcely a matter of surprise that no one has at present succeeded in expounding this divine enigma, inasmuch as the prophet himself was not able to comprehend it.

5. Another question worth asking is this: What is the relation in which the Bible stands to all other literature? The Bible claims a plenary inspiration. The Old Testament often claims it for itself. The New Testament claims it for the Old, and it claims it for itself also, and that in no hesitating fashion; and yet the Bible must be conscious that it contains the speeches of men who were not inspired: that is, these speeches are not inspired in the sense that God either suggested the thought or supplied the words. They are inspired in the sense that holy men from God were moved to put them upon the record. Here, again, we quote a third definition of inspiration: "Inspiration is the actuating energy of the Holy Ghost in whatever degree and manner it may have been exercised, guided by

which the human agents chosen by God have officially proclaimed His will by word of mouth, or have *committed to writing the several portions of the Bible.*" There is no little ambiguity in the word "inspiration." It is generally understood to mean the infusion of thought into the mind, but technically it means not the revelation but the recording of the revelation. Its office is not to originate, but to report. The inspired writer was frequently the recorder or reporter. Baxter used the illustration that revelation was the blood, inspiration the vein through which it flowed. The Bible writers were moved to report the sayings and record the actions of certain men who were not moved of God to say or do the things they said and did. This we think cannot be denied. The Bible copies itself. There are something like a hundred instances of repetition, some of which are striking. The Bible quotes from heathen authors, Paul quotes the Greek poets, and we quote in the epistles we write; and if a borrowed phrase expresses our meaning better than one of our own composing, what objection is there to this? Does that warrant any one in saying that we did not write the epistle, or that such a composition is not ours? Does not the adoption of the expression quoted make it ours? He says that "Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses," and who can gainsay his statement? That the Bible history does not mention these men is no evidence that they never existed, and Paul was at liberty to collect information from any source. The only question is, Was it true? Jude is said to have quoted from the apocryphal Book of Enoch; but that is not at all certain. Alford quotes Volkmar to the effect that the Book of Enoch was not written till the year A.D. 132, which would be

after Jude had written his epistle. Dr. Salmon says that Volkmar is in this opposed by all other critics. Westcott quotes Hoffman and Moses Stuart to the effect that the book was written in Christian times too late for Jude to quote from; and sums it all up by saying, "The evidence is insufficient for conclusive reasoning." With reference, then, to this celebrated quotation, about which there has been so much controversy, three conclusions are open to us. Either that Jude quoted from this apocryphal book, or the author of the Book of Enoch quoted from Jude; or, what is far more probable, they both quoted from some well-known Jewish tradition. And here, again, the real question is, Is it true?

6. The occasional possession of the extraordinary gift of inspiration did not render it impossible that its possessor should fall into sin. Moses, and David, and Solomon, and doubtless other of the Scripture writers, fell into sin before and after they wrote portions of the Word of God. The most notable instance is that of Peter, who, for fear of the Jews, dissembled, and he and those he drew away "walked not uprightly," according to the truth of the Gospel. In fact, Peter, regarded by some as the chief apostle, taught error, than which, considering his exalted position in the Church, and his immense influence, he could hardly have been guilty of a more damning offence. This case has probably been a great stumbling-block to most of us. We have naturally asked, how are we to distinguish between what a man preaches and what a man writes, so as to make out that what is written is inspired truth, and what he spoke was uninspired falsehood? Ask Peter himself, and he will tell you that he was conscious that he was

dissembling at Antioch, as he was conscious that he was lying when, in the palace of the High Priest, he declared with oaths and cursing, "I know not the Man." He could not fail, after his experience with Cornelius, to know that what he was teaching was in opposition to the truth. Else, why did he not defend himself against Paul's accusations? Ask Peter whether he was conscious that he was inspired when he was preaching circumcision, and he will reply with an emphatic "No!" Ask him whether he was conscious he was inspired when he wrote his epistle, and he will answer "Yes," quite as emphatically. Does he not class himself with inspired men when he exhorts the people "to be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of *us the apostles* of the Lord and Saviour"? The possibility of falling into sin and into error, on the part of a man at other times employed as the mouthpiece and amanuensis of God, is a fact belonging to the human side of the question of inspiration, at which no one will stumble if he takes care to obtain Bible notions from the Bible as to what its inspiration is.

7. Is it possible, at this or any other stage of the inquiry, to ascertain the mode of the Spirit's operations upon the subjects of inspiration? Does the Bible disclose this secret, or furnish any sort of clue by which this matter, so mysterious, could be made plain? No. In this case, as in that of the soul's regeneration, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." And may we not add, inspired of the Spirit?

Let any man analyse his own religious experience, even for a single day, and he will find it impossible to tell where the divine leaves off and the human begins, so do they interwork and interpenetrate each other. We enter a vinery, we admire the luscious purple clusters; we say to the gardener, "Can you tell how much of the size and quality of these grapes is the result of artificial heat, and how much of the natural warmth of the sun?" He would answer, "No, that is impossible; but this I know, but for the artificial heat we could have no such a yield, and but for the sunshine all the artificial heat we could have generated would have been of no avail to produce this crop." And so of the Scriptures; they are the joint production of the natural and the supernatural; but how the one operates upon the other is a mystery. And are there not mysteries in nature as well as in grace? Is not the mysterious a necessary element in a religion of which the Infinite and the Eternal is its Author and End?

8. Perhaps a word ought to be said about discrepancies. To a great many they are the "dead flies in the ointment of the apothecary, which cause it to send forth a stinking savour." We thought at one time of endeavouring to clear up a number of these; but it demanded more space than we had at our disposal. It may be sufficient to say, that about fifty per cent. of these are simply variations in statements, and therefore no discrepancy at all; because, beyond doubt, the substance of the same truth may be presented in a great variety of ways, without the slightest detriment to the integrity of the thing stated. And their circumstantial diversity is one of the surest signs of accuracy. Any English judge will tell you, if there is a literal sort of

verbal uniformity in the evidence tendered by the witnesses, it creates suspicion that it is not genuine. And we may feel quite sure, if the Gospels had, all four of them told the same tale in the same words, the very men that now haggle about discrepancies would have been the first and loudest to denounce the whole as a forgery. A large number of these so-called discrepancies are only so in appearance. They are not so in reality. A certain percentage may be attributed to defects in the copies of Scripture, or to defects in translation and exposition. Sometimes a little additional information would make all perfectly clear. A large number have been satisfactorily explained, others are sure to be cleared up, a few will remain to the end because the needed information is lost beyond recovery. While, therefore, it would be too much to say that all difficulties have been removed, and all seeming discrepancies satisfactorily accounted for, we will be bold to say no real error in the whole Bible, as it left its original writers, has been demonstrated, nor is ever likely to be, since the autographic manuscripts have long since perished. These apparent discrepancies are a sort of stock-in-trade for a certain class of low-minded infidels. Either they are so ignorant as not to know they have most of them been answered again and again; or, knowing this, they are so dishonest as to parade them before their disciples, as if no answer had been given. As an antidote against these, we recommend the beginner to study Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, or Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, and thus study the harmonies of the Bible before he deals with its supposed discords.

There has been, and still is, a good deal of discussion

about verbal inspiration. This theory has some of the mightiest names of theologic science among its champions, and they know well how to defend their position. They have a good deal to say for the view they take. It is presumed that no one would deny that certain portions of Scripture are verbally inspired. For instance, the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God upon the two tables of stone. And what are we to say of those portions of holy writ, prefaced by such expressions as, "Thus saith the Lord"? St. Paul's statement also is worthy of careful consideration, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. He declares, first, the fact that things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, "God hath revealed by His Spirit"; and, in the second place, he tells us how he transmitted these things, which no man could know but by the Spirit of God, and he adds, "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." The opinion of Archbishop Usher, a most learned man, was to the effect that "the inspired writers were secretaries who have received their instructions, but left to choose their own words, God overruling their judgment and all their faculties in a mysterious manner, which He alone can comprehend." In other words, the Scripture writers were free as writers ever were. That fact lies so on the face of the record, that it cannot be contradicted; hence the almost endless diversity and variety, which is one of the charms of the Bible. But they were, at the same time, in selecting the words to express their thoughts, and selecting the materials of the historical portions of the book, under the special influence of the Holy Ghost. A great authority has

said that no theory of inspiration has wrought more mischief than the theory that God gave the thought, and man was left entirely to himself to supply the words. That cannot be the correct idea. That would destroy all certainty as to what was the mind of the Spirit, and would lead to endless quibblings, and to nothing else but quibbling. Man left to himself is fallible, and any work of this sort that he is left to himself to do must of consequence be fallible also. Go to an illiterate peasant, and give him as good a notion as you can give him of a certain thing you desire to have embodied in an Act of Parliament, and leave him to himself to draw it up, and what would be the consequence? For all legal purposes, the document would be worth something less than the paper it was written on; and can it for a moment be believed that God Almighty trusted the writing of His momentous message to the world, a message upon which the eternal welfare of millions of immortal beings depended, to illiterate peasants and fishermen to write, without Himself superintending that writing? No; that is incredible. The truth lies between these two extremes: that the writers of Scripture were mere machines, and that every word was dictated by God, and that other extreme which reduces the Divine activity to little more than the bestowment of those natural gifts which the Bible bards share with Homer and Shakespeare. Faithful to the inductive method, we have endeavoured all along to allow the Bible to speak for itself, and the Bible declares these two facts: that the writing was inspired as well as the writers. This is a great mystery, as we before said; we cannot fathom it; we cannot ascertain and therefore

cannot describe or define the nature of those operations of the Divine Spirit upon the human spirit, which have resulted in God's word written. But, certainly, the testimony of the Bible to itself is this—that as to its letter it is quite as much the word of God as it is the word of man.

There are two qualities essential to such a document or set of documents as we are discussing. In the first place, they must be understandable, or they could not be a revelation. There may be obscurities, there may be portions of which the meaning is more or less doubtful. Our state of education accounts for that; but the great outlines of its teaching must be so plain that he who runs may read. The highway of holiness is so straight, so well defined, that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. In the second place, they must be authoritative. They must carry all the weight of God's sanction. There must be no double-dealing, no paltering with words and phrases. It must be understood to be God's word in the sense that it conveys to man the mind of God, the whole mind of God, and nothing but the mind of God, else we are as one that beats the air. We stand by the bed of a dying man —the most awful position possible. Talk of the sanctity of sacraments, and the responsibility of administering them. Is that more responsible than the uttering of the last words into the ear of an undying soul just as it glides through the portals of eternity? Well, we speak to the dying man one of those exceeding great and precious promises with which the book abounds. He asks, "Who says that?" We make answer, "Paul"; and he replies, "What right has Paul to make such a promise? What is the worth of that to me, the promise of a man, forsooth, who

died eighteen hundred years ago? Will God hold Himself pledged at the instance of a mortal?" No; we must be able, and that without stammering tongue, to tell him that God Himself has spoken these words, or we had better hold our peace. We kneel by the side of a distressed penitent. We catch the words, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We speak to him; he looks us in the face, and asks, "What must I do?" We reply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He wants to know whose words these are. We answer, "Paul's." He responds, "They give me no comfort. What authority has Paul or any man to lay down conditions upon which the holy and righteous God will pardon the sins of man?" No; we must be ready to tell him that God the Spirit speaks through the apostle these words, and that virtually they are the very words of the Almighty. We reprove a man for sin, the sin of violating the Sabbath. We say to him, "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day." He demands whose words these are. We respond, "The words of Moses." At which he grows angry, and asks, "Who is Moses? And who made him a judge and lawgiver over me?" We tell him this is God's command; and if his conscience has any sensibility left, maybe he will repent and find pardon, and never be guilty of such breach of the Divine Law again. There are many objections to the "dictation" theory. Even Professor Gaussen, though he again and again employs the word, denies the thing. Against the verbal theory, in its extreme literal sense, we may oppose the diversities of statement; such, for instance, as the inscription above the head of the Saviour upon the Cross, which, in the four evangelists, is in

no two of them precisely the same. It has been suggested that Pilate hastily sketched it in Latin, and that some one translated it into Greek and Hebrew; and hence the verbal differences. There is a verbal difference, though the sense is the same. In another instance, where, if anywhere, we should expect to find verbal literalness, the words of institution in the Lord's Supper, the three accounts of the evangelists, and St. Paul's, all four differ from one another. The difference likewise in the style of the writers is so obvious and so definite as to force upon us the conviction that there was no restraint put upon the freedom of the individual writers. The quotations of the Old Testament in the New appear to us to point in the same direction. Sometimes our Lord and His apostles quote from the Hebrew, sometimes from the Septuagint version, and sometimes these quotations differ from both. There is certainly an absence of verbal identity. Then, supposing the original words were dictated, supposing the fingers of the penmen were guided by God when the autograph copies of Holy Scripture were written, we have them not. Beyond dispute there are plenty of variations in the manuscripts in our possession to-day. Indeed, variations have been detected in the printed copies of the Bible. Nothing but a succession of miracles could have rendered it otherwise. God certainly could have so ordered it that His word should have come down to us without a jot or tittle of variation, every copy as like every other copy as those of a stereotyped edition would be; but He has not thought fit to do so, from which we conclude He did not deem it necessary. God was satisfied that His word should be relatively perfect—perfect for the end it was destined to

answer, although it might lack that ideal and absolute perfection which is the sole attribute of His own person. In this respect, it is exactly the same with His word as with His works. Nothing is absolutely perfect but God.

CHAPTER VII.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE.

It is, perhaps, desirable to say a word about the history of the doctrine of Inspiration. The Jewish Church had unhesitating faith in the inspiration of their Scriptures. Professor Abrahams, in the Clerical Symposium, tells us that, in the opinion of the Rabbis, "every part of the Bible was inspired, and the historical books no less than the prophetical were an integral part of the word of God." But he says the books of the Apocrypha were not numbered among the true Scriptures. The eighth principle of Maimonides runs thus: "I believe with a perfect faith that the law which we now possess is the one which was revealed unto Moses our teacher." Then the Rabbis left the King's Highway for Bypath Meadow. They placed the oral law upon the same footing as the written law. Then the oral law was committed to writing. This compilation of traditions was called the Mishnah. The office of the Mishnah was to interpret the written law, and hence the Gemara was written to interpret the Mishnah. Then a host of commentators rose up to explain the Gemara or Talmud. Then it was discovered that the explainers themselves needed explaining, as was likely to be the case; and so on *ad infinitum* till the Tishbite comes. "The Tishbite will resolve difficulties and perplexities." The Reformed Jews

have thrown off the notion that the Mishnah is as much the word of God as the original Scriptures are, and they hold with us that the Bible has a human as well as a Divine side, and that, in order to be the word of God in any worthy sense, it must be relatively perfect; yet it cannot prove itself to be absolutely perfect. The ancient authorities held a high doctrine. Even Philo declared that God "suggested to the prophet what he must say." Josephus, who represented the belief of the Palestinian Jews of the sect of the Pharisees, writes: "It is implanted in every Jew, from the hour of his birth, to esteem these writings as the ordinance of God, and to stand by them; in defence of them, if needs be, to die." This faith was, as we have seen, the faith of Christ and His apostles; and it has been the faith of the Church from that day to this. There is something assuring in the fact that believers of to-day are resting in the calm acquiescence of more than three thousand years. As to the doctrine held in Christian times, prior to the Reformation, Principal Cunningham, in his *Historical Theology*, asserts: "In the writings of the Fathers of the first three centuries—and the same may be said of the writings, without exception, of many succeeding centuries—there is not the slightest trace of anything like that depreciation of the Scriptures, that denial of their fitness because of their obscurity and alleged imperfection to be a sufficient rule or standard of faith, which stamps so peculiar a guilt and infamy upon Popery and Tractarianism. On the contrary, there is constant reference to Scripture as the only authoritative standard." Dr. Pope says: "Clemens Romanus, the first uninspired Christian writer, assigns to the Scriptures the fullest inspiration. Paul was divinely

inspired; Polycarp quotes the apostles as Scripture." The writers following these speak of the subjects of inspiration as mirrors that reflected according to their polish, as instruments of music into which the Divine breath was breathed. The Nicene Creed declares the Holy Ghost spake by the prophets. Gregory the Great said: "It is needless to ask what writer wrote; as the Holy Ghost was the only author, it is superfluous to inquire with what pen an author writes." "The Holy Scriptures," said Origen, one of the first scholars of his day, "are penetrated throughout as by the wind by the fulness of the Spirit; and there is nothing therein, either in the Prophets, or the Law, or the Gospels, or in the Apostolic writings, which does not proceed from the Divine Majesty." Eusebius, in the fourth century, declares: "I hold it to be presumption for any man to say that the Holy Scripture has erred." Augustine asserts it as his "most settled belief that none of the writers of the books called Canonical committed any error whatever in writing." The Fathers generally spoke of the Scriptures as the "Divine writings," "Divinely inspired writings," "Instrumentum Divinum," "Cœlestes Literæ." The great Athanasius reckons the books of the Old Testament to be twenty-two, and thereby excludes the books we Protestants regard as Apocryphal. "These," he says, "are the fountains of salvation; in these alone is the teaching of religion made known unto man. Let no one add to these." Melito, Bishop of Sardis, whom his contemporaries called "a prophet," travelled all the way to the Holy Land to satisfy himself upon a matter of such moment, so that (to use his own words) he might know the *exact truth*. He gives us the same books that we have in our Old Testament,

except that he does not name the Book of Esther. It is possible he included that with some other of the books, perhaps Ezra; and we have the same number given by Epiphanius and Gregory Nazianzen. We come now to the Reformation. The Reformation was the revolt of the human mind from a spiritual and intellectual tyranny that had become intolerable. It was the time when the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament experienced a resurrection like that of Christ's two witnesses alluded to in the Apocalypse. The Bible was the soul of the Reformation. The word of God accomplished the same glorious results in Europe in the sixteenth century as it accomplished in Jerusalem and Antioch, and Corinth and Rome, in the first. At first, men's eyes were almost blinded with the excessive brightness—they were drunk with the new wine of the kingdom; and when, after a while, they grew accustomed to the light, they, with something of the feelings with which one can imagine a glorified saint on the morning of the resurrection will look back into the loathsome grave out of which he has just been delivered,—so, with mingled feelings of horror, disgust, and triumph, our forefathers in the faith looked back into the sepulchre in which for generations the soul of the nations had been entombed. The conflict then commenced was a conflict between the Bible and the so-called Church; a conflict which, in the order of Providence, was waged in the Diet of Worms, in the Genevan Republic, in the States General of France, and in the Parliaments of England and Scotland. Against an infallible Pope the Reformers opposed the infallible Word. In the Romish Church, prior to the Reformation, there were some that held stringent notions, and some whose views were lax,

and between these two boundary lines there was a sort of border-land of freedom, with which the Church did not interfere. Some went even so far as to say the evangelists fell into error. Luther was inconsistent. Sometimes he stood up boldly for the supremacy of the Scriptures, and used to say, "To put the Divine word beneath human invention was to be deficient of understanding." Again, "No Christian can be forced to bind himself by aught but by the Holy Scriptures, which alone have Divine right." Yet he also said there was a mixture of wood, hay, and stubble in the writers of the Bible, and not always silver, gold, and precious stones; but the substance was there that could not be burned. He took other liberties with the word of God, which even his high place among the mighty champions of the truth cannot excuse. "He is deceived," said the serene Melancthon, "who seeks the form of Christianity anywhere else than from the Canonical Scriptures." "This is my view," said Zwingle, "the word of God must be held by us in the highest honour, and that to no word such faith should be given as to that." Yet Zwingle would hardly be considered orthodox. He denies infallibility to the apostles, and claims it for Christ alone. His words are, as quoted by Tholuck, "It is not true that the writings of all holy men are infallible, nor is it true that they do not err. This pre-eminence must be given to the Son of God alone, out of the whole human races."

John Calvin, one of the greatest of the Reformers, delivers himself in this wise: "If true religion is to enlighten us, our principle must be that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and that it is impossible for

any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture." Without doubt, the word of God was tenaciously held by the fathers of the Reformation to be the sole rule of faith and practice. The creed of the Lutheran Church upon this subject is as follows: "We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm, according to which all dogmas and doctors ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings, both of the Old and New Testaments." The Confession of the Swiss Churches was, "The holy, divine, Biblical Scripture, which is the word of God given by the Holy Spirit, and transmitted to the world by the prophets and apostles, is the most ancient, the most complete, and the supreme doctrine, containing everything which serves for the true knowledge, love, and honour of God, for right and true piety, and for the preparation of a pious, decorous, and a blessed life." This first Swiss Confession of Faith was drawn up in 1536; another followed, much more rigid, in 1675, of which this is a translation. Speaking of the Old Testament, it says: "It is divinely inspired equally as regards the consonants, the vowels, and even the vowel points, or at least as it regards the force of the vowel points, both as to matter and as to words." Similar to this is the Gallican or French Confession. It reads: "We believe that the word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from Him alone, and not from men," etc. Arminius, discoursing upon *The Perfection of the Holy Scriptures*, declares as follows: "By this expression, we understand *a relative perfection* which, for the sake of a particular purpose, agrees with the

Scriptures as with an instrument, and according to which they perfectly comprehend all things that have been, are now, or ever will be necessary for the salvation of the Church." The Sixth Article of the Church of England is to this effect: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." This was framed with a view to the Papists, who insisted that the traditions of the Church were necessary to the interpretation of the word of God. Some would complain of the vagueness of this Article. It is studiously cautious not to commit itself too far. It does not say the Bible is the word of God. It, in fact, says nothing about that portion that is not necessary to salvation.

As far as the creeds of Christendom are concerned, inspiration may be regarded as an open question. We have no authorised theory of it, no authorised and generally acknowledged definition of it. And this is well, perhaps. The shorter the creed the less occasion of heresy. Within certain limits there is freedom. No doubt, if some ministers in some Churches were to deny the Bible to be inspired, and to talk of the fallibility, as religious teachers, of Christ and His apostles, such ministers would be told they were unfit to teach; otherwise, as long as due bounds are respected, every man is to a great extent at liberty to frame his own theory and entertain his own opinions, and consequently, it may be, no two are perfectly and exactly agreed; but with most of those who have studied the matter sufficiently to have any definite opinion at all, it is

hoped and believed there is agreement in all essentials. Some maintain what is called a high doctrine, like Professors Gaussen and Hodge and Garbett, and a host of honourable names in England and Scotland, and America and the Continent. Some sneer at them as narrow; but it is better to be narrow and deep than to be broad and shallow. Shallowness is one of the crying evils of our times; and this also is an evil, that shallow streams make the most noise. Some again, and not shallow men, hold the opinion that we must allow different degrees of inspiration; but this is a theory that finds no confirmation in the Scriptures, and they are the phenomena to be studied, and to whatever they say about their own origin we must attentively hearken. Then, again, some are inclined to the opinion that only the portions of the Scriptures relating directly to religion, to what is called salvation, are to be regarded as the result of the Spirit's inspiration. In matters of science and history, and many other things, we have the simple opinion of the writers, which we may estimate at what value we think proper. But, as before said, the historical is so blended with the doctrinal that they cannot very well be separated; and if the historical basis is insecure, the doctrine founded thereon cannot stand. A good many learned and, as far as one can judge, religious people are willing to subscribe to this formula—the Bible contains the word of God, but they refuse to say the Bible is the word of God. They ask to be allowed to take what they like of it, and leave the rest. They say, if one is invited to a banquet, he is not obliged to take all that is set before him, but to make a selection both as to kind and quantity. They admire

the love of God, but ignore His justice; they revel in the thought of the life everlasting, but deny the death eternal. They would enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, but reject its duties. They clutch at the promises, but have no concern for the threatenings. They would enter the Promised Land, but refuse to cross the desert. Now, is a servant to select the task he likes, and reject that which he dislikes? Is a soldier allowed to do what he thinks proper as to the part he shall take in the battle? Is a subject permitted to keep the laws that are pleasing to him, and break those that are displeasing? Are such one-sided views of God, and life, and duty, and responsibility calculated to build up a Christian character? Maybe we are all more or less one-sided; but that is a defect we should try to remedy, and not to cultivate. Is this to follow out the example Christ has set us? Is this religion of self-pleasing the one He taught us? This is prejudicial enough in the case of the private professor; but it becomes absolutely pernicious in the case of a public teacher. If it be true that one of some authority has told us, that "half a truth is the worst of lies," then anything more utterly unlike the Good Shepherd than these mendacious hirelings one cannot imagine. Then there are others who talk of inspiration, and all the while attribute all sorts of errors and lapses of memory and blunders to the subjects of inspiration; and that, while the Spirit of the Lord is on them, and in them, without appearing to be conscious of any incongruity. After a fashion they profess to trust men as to the most momentous concerns of the future, whom they cannot rely upon for the most trivial facts of the present. And then there is another class of mind that

turns edge at a bit of reasoning. They hate definiteness in anything. Above all, they have a disrelish for Christian doctrine. Give us, they say, religion without dogma. They might as well ask for astronomy without science, or art without culture, or a Samson without a backbone. With them, a sickly sentimentalism takes the place of reasoning. A limp and sluggish intellect is at the root of all this lack of energy. Then there are some, alas! too many! who have no faith in the supernatural, no sympathy with things unseen. They are of the earth, earthy. Materialism blinds them. Their deity is law. The highest conception they can reach up to is force—unconscious force. We cannot allude to the Mystics and the inward light. Dr. Lee classifies all doubtful modern theories of inspiration under three heads, and he asserts that all are the offspring of the speculations of the Jewish doctors, especially Maimonides and Spinoza. The first theory may be regarded as represented by Le Clerc and Grotius, and in substance it amounts to this: they denied inspiration proper altogether, and argued, as to the New Testament, that Christ's promise that the Spirit should guide His disciples "into all truth" had never been fulfilled. The second theory is that of different degrees of inspiration. Of this, Dr. Doddridge and Dr. Dick and Dr. Henderson were the abettors. Following the example of the Jewish doctors, Dr. Doddridge contends for three degrees of inspiration, and with this Dr. Dick, in the main, agrees. Dr. Henderson stands up for five degrees, viz. Excitement, Invigoration, Superintendence, Guidance, and direct Revelation. The third theory is that advocated by Schleiermacher, whose speculations Mr. Morell has presented to

English readers in his *Philosophy of Religion.* According to this theory, inspiration is subjective—that is, it is the result of the unusual excitement of the human mind. No thought is infused; but just as the mind, under powerful excitement, thinks brighter and loftier thoughts than when in a more quiescent condition, so the writers of Scripture, when under powerful religious stimulus, conceived ideas that, under other circumstances, they would not have conceived. Inspiration, according to this, was not objective —that is, no thought was infused into the mind from any higher intelligence. In no sense did God speak. There was no outward voice or vision. The argument in theory is, Christ is alone the Revelation of God to man. There are some among us who say, "I believe in Christ first, and in the inspiration of the Bible because I believe in Christ." And this is easily understood. They believe in the history of the incarnation upon the ground of historic evidence, the ground on which they give credence to any and all history in which they have belief; and having believed in the fact that Christ was God manifest in the flesh, they believe that the Old Testament Scriptures were inspired, because Christ so emphatically said they were; and they believe the New Testament Scriptures are inspired, because He promised the Spirit should teach His followers and guide them into all truth, and because they see in Christ the Old Testament Scriptures literally fulfilled. At first, they read the Gospels as mere history, and then, believing them as history, they became convinced they are inspired history. And in this there is nothing to complain of. The majority of English-speaking people no doubt accept the doctrine that the Scriptures are inspired upon the

authority of the Church, or their parents or teachers, and multitudes never get beyond this; and the truth thus held is held as a mere notion. It is like a chip of granite in a cup of water. There is nothing diffusive, nothing soluble about it. Like seed-corn in the dead hand of an Egyptian mummy it never grows, it never fructifies. But there are multitudes of others who, though they accept this truth on trust in the beginning, verify it afterwards; not by learning—they have not that—not by giving their life to discussion and studying books of evidence; happily for them that also is denied them; but they prove for themselves the inspiration of the Scriptures by experience; and there is no evidence like the evidence of experience.

> "A man of subtile reasoning asked a peasant if he knew
> Where was the internal evidence that proved the Bible true?
> The terms of disputative art had never met his ear,
> So he laid his hand upon his heart, and only answered, *Here.*"

Dr. Daniel Steele, of Boston University, writes: "My belief in the Bible was first traditional. While a small boy, I began to infer that there must be something divine in a book from the study of which my mother came forth from her closet with a heavenly serenity, which she preserved amid the adversities and asperities of farm-life, which sorely fretted my less spiritual father." He then tells how he dealt with the intellectual difficulties, and then he adds: "At this point of my history, through the mercy of God, a new and demonstrative style of proof was marvellously opened to me. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.' 'Taste and see.' I tasted, and I now see by a set of spiritual intuitions, quickened into activity by the Holy Ghost, that Christ, the

central theme of the Bible, is a real and living Person, Who has manifested Himself unto me, even me, as the Almighty Saviour, delivering me from the guilt, the dominion, and the indwelling of sin." A friend one day gave this advice to Arnold as a specific for curing doubt. Not by physic, *i.e.*, reading and controversy, but by diet and regimen, *i.e.*, holy living. But after all is said and done, there will remain, as long as we know in part, problems unsolved, and mysteries unfathomed, and difficulties unsurmounted, so we must exercise the patience of hope. Robert Hall said: "A religion without mystery is like a temple without a God;" and Butler, with his usual wisdom, remarks, "That revelation is designed not only to communicate truth, but to test our loyalty to God; that probation consists not only in obeying His will, when clearly known, but in our treatment of a partially obscure revelation, patiently examining it in order to know what that will is." Whatever else we do, let us not cast away our confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. However dark the night, however violent the storm, however the billows break over us and drench us with spray, as for life itself we must cling to the rock; when our hands are benumbed with cold and our fingers are cramped, and we do not feel we are clinging, still cling as by a death-grasp to the rock. "Come what come may, Time and the hour runs through the roughest day." Dr. Lee gives a beautiful illustration in the case of M. Le Verrier, the famous astronomer, of fidelity of the kind desired. "No sooner had astronomers commenced, some years ago, to suspect that the motions of Uranus were modified by some unknown cause, than all possible hypotheses were at once hazarded as to its nature;

among the rest, that the law of gravitation was not universal." "I will not stop," said Le Verrier, "to consider this idea, that the laws of gravitation may cease to be vigorous at the great distance that Uranus is from the sun. It is not the first time, in order to explain inequalities for which they are unable to account, that certain persons have betaken themselves to question the principle of universal gravitation. But we know also that these hypotheses have always disappeared before a more profound examination of facts." How wise and admirable is this conduct! And is the existence and universality of the law of gravitation, as a truth of science, more certainly established than the Godhood of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures are truths established in the religious world? No; a thousand times no! There is, we are told, a seeming discrepancy between the theory of gravitation, as the cause of the tides, and the actual ebb and flow of the tides. And do scientists throw away the thousand facts which declare for gravitation, because they have come across a single instance which seems not to be in harmony with that principle or law? Certainly not! They have more sense. And shall we give up our faith in the Divine origin of our sacred books, the truth and divinity of which have been substantiated by an array of evidence well-nigh overwhelming, by so great a cloud of witnesses that we have not time and patience to hear half their testimony, because the names of a few persons in Chronicles differ in their spelling from what they do in some other parts of the sacred record? Names! What family (with the exception of a very few that will not be varied) has been consistent in the way it spells its name? One of the editors of Shakespeare

tells us the great poet's name, even in his lifetime, was spelt "in innumerably different ways." Bunyan's biographer, Dr. Brown, informs us that the prince of dreamers' name was spelt in two-and-thirty different ways. When, at the beginning of the present century, the ill-feeling between France and England was at its bitterest, scores of the French refugees, descendants of the Huguenots, changed their foreign names into their English equivalents. Or shall we stumble at the difference in the numbers in the Books of Kings and Chronicles? Is it not known that the Jews used letters for numerals? and that some of those letters are so nearly alike that a mistake on the part of a copyist was one of the easiest things imaginable; and that a dot over a letter, according to Dr. Kennicott, changed the units into tens; and Mr. Geikie says that two dots changed the units into thousands. This will account for the differences in numbers; and for these the copyist must be held responsible. Shall we refuse to accept a history, known, from other sources, to be wonderfully accurate, because of a clerical error which makes it appear that a son was born two years after the death of his father? This is manifestly an error of transcription. The original writer could not make such a mistake. Shall we refuse to accept the Gospel history because Mark, reckoning after the manner of the Jews, tells us that our Lord was crucified at the third hour, and John, reckoning as did the Romans, says it was about the sixth hour when the deed was done, as is the opinion of Dr. Edersheim and Geikie, and other high authorities? As has been frequently remarked, we have this treasure in earthen vessels. That there are slight flaws in the vessel, as it has been handed down to us,

cannot be denied; but this is no proof that the flaws were there when the vessel first left the potter's hand; and what is of quite as much importance, the defect in the vessel does not detract from the value of the treasure. "It has been truly said," observes Mr. Godwin, in his introductory lecture at the opening of the New College, "that such is the character of the New Testament Scriptures, that the worst copy of the Greek text and the worst translation represents the original with sufficient accuracy to secure all the highest ends of Christian instruction." Bentley, that Atlas of classic learning, speaks to the same effect. He says, "It is a fact undeniable that the sacred books have suffered no more alterations than common or classic authors, and have no more variations than what must necessarily have happened from the nature of things. What need of a perpetual miracle, if, with all the present changes, the whole Scripture is perfect and sufficient to all the great ends and purposes of its first writing?" Again, the same high authority states: "The real text of the sacred writers is comparatively exact; nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost, choose as awkwardly as you will, choose the worst by design out of the whole lump of readings." Full of hope, Professor Warfield writes: "The autographic text of the New Testament is distinctly within the reach of criticism in so immensely the greater part of the volume that we cannot despair of restoring to ourselves and the Church of God His book, word for word, as He gave it by inspiration to men."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ATTITUDE OF INSPIRATION TO THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

To bring our investigations down to date, and to put ourselves abreast of the thinking of the age, it will be necessary just to glance at what is called the Higher Criticism, and to ask to what extent is the traditional doctrine of inspiration affected by it, and whether or not it can be so modified as to come into harmony with it. What do we mean by the Higher Criticism? The Biblical student takes account of three different kinds of criticism.

First, Textual criticism. The aim of this is to collate ancient manuscripts of the sacred writings, together with the ancient versions of them, and the numerous quotations of them found in early Christian writers; and these are so abundant that Lord Hales assured Dr. Buchanan that in the writings of the Fathers of the second and third centuries he had found the whole of the New Testament, with the exception of eleven verses. With the greatest enthusiasm the learned have hunted for these ancient documents, and many of them have devoted their lives to what to some would be the monotonous drudgery of comparing and examining, and that often with a powerful glass, those dusty and discoloured parchments, in order, if possible, to obtain a text in perfect agreement with the original. Such

sacrifice for the common good is beyond all commendation. Then, having secured a text as accurate as possible, another set of critics take it and analyse it, and by aid of grammars and lexicons they do their best to ascertain what is the meaning of the writer, and, through the writer, to ascertain what was and is the mind of God. This is exegetical criticism.

Thirdly, There is what is called the Higher Criticism. It does not mean better or more laborious or more learned criticism. It is merely a technical expression. The task the Higher Criticism sets itself to accomplish is a very worthy one. It compares Scripture with Scripture, especially with respect to style and history. Indeed, there is nothing new in the thing. It is the same kind of investigation into the date and authorship of the sacred writers which our fathers conducted under another name. They called such labours researches into the genuineness and authenticity of the ancient writings, meaning by that an investigation as to the date and contents and authorship of the sacred books. The Higher Criticism deals with the internal evidence with a view to ascertain the harmony or the discrepancies, should there be any. The first portion of Scripture submitted to this kind of test was the Pentateuch. A book was written in 1753 by Jean Astruc, Doctor and Professor of Medicine in the Royal College of Paris, and Court Physician to the King of France, Louis XIV. His critical eye observed that throughout the Book of Genesis, and so far as the sixth chapter of the Book of Exodus, traces were to be found of two original documents, each characterised by the distinct use of the names of God; the one by the name Elohim,

and the other by the name Jehovah. At first the book attracted little notice; but twenty-seven years after, the theory it propounded was taken up by J. G. Eichhorn, and given to the world in his now famous *Introduction to the Old Testament.* It was Eichhorn, too, that first made current the phrase Higher Criticism. Championed by so high an authority, the theory that Genesis was compiled from ancient documents became at once fashionable; and from that day to this it has given colour to almost all speculative criticism, both on the Continent and in England. It is impossible to go into the history of the movement thus started. The volumes written for and against it would fill a library, and pages might be covered by the names of authors and the titles of their works. Dr. Cave, in his book called *The Inspiration of the Old Testament Inductively Considered,* one of the best books we know upon this difficult and important subject, tells us the theory has passed through some four or five different phases, and has as often changed its name. The theory of Astruc in the hands of Eichhorn was soon extended. Eichhorn saw the uses of the Divine names were, as we have shown, too indefinite to build a theory upon that alone, and so he endeavoured to bring in other proofs that Genesis was compiled from previously existing documents. Then, again, the disciples of Eichhorn soon outran their master. De Wette, known as the universal doubter, led the way, and the distinguished Ewald quickly followed. In his *History of Israel,* translated by Russell Martineau, Ewald insists that he can discover, not only two documents distinguished by the use of the names of the Deity, but at least seven from which the writer of the Pentateuch

borrowed his materials; sometimes borrowing part of a sentence from one document, and completing it by borrowing the rest of the sentence from another document. We will not presume to pass judgment upon Ewald, than whom the Higher Criticism has not had a mightier champion. But here is a critique taken from the Preface of Dr. Milman's *History of the Jews*. We quote Milman, because he was a leader in this country of what has been styled the advanced school of opinion, and generally suspected by a certain section of his own Church as having strong leanings towards Rationalism. "Ewald," he says, "seems to have attempted an utter impossibility. That the Hebrew records, especially the books of Moses, may have been compiled from various documents, and it may be at an uncertain time, all this is assuredly a legitimate subject of inquiry. There may be some certain discernible marks and signs of difference in age and authorship. But that any critical microscope in the nineteenth century can be so exquisite and so powerful as to dissect the whole with perfect nicety, to decompose it, and assign each separate paragraph to its special origin in three, four, or five, or more independent documents, each of which has contributed its part, this seems to me a task which no mastery of the Hebrew language, with all its kindred tongues, no discernment, however fine and discriminating, can achieve. I must confess I read Ewald ever with increasing wonder at his unparalleled ingenuity, his surpassing learning, but usually with decreasing conviction." Dr. Milman goes on to say, "There are two theories between which range all the conclusions of what may be called the critical school. First, That the Pentateuch in

its present form is of very late date, the reign of Hezekiah, Josiah, Manasseh, or even subsequent to these. From what materials formed, and on the antiquity of those materials, opinions vary infinitely. Secondly, That the Pentateuch, even in its present form, is of very high antiquity, as high as the time of Moses; but that it has undergone many interpolations, some additions, and much modification, extending to the language in successive ages." And then Dr. Milman adds, "If I am to choose, I am most decidedly for the second."

Those who are curious to see to what extent this critical vivisection of Genesis is carried may consult the analysis of Genesis by Eichhorn, Tuck, Schrader, Wellhausen, as given by Dr. Cave in the book just referred to, or that of Quarry, taken from Dr. Samuel Davidson, and that of Ayre, taken from De Wette, or that of Stähelin, by the same author, or that of Bishop Colenso, in the Rev. W. B. Boyce's book on *The Higher Criticism*, published by our own Conference Office; and they will see at a glance how completely these elaborate and discordant theories contradict one another. The theory, as to the age and authorship of the Pentateuch, in that most recent form which it has taken from the hands of Graf, and of such men as Reuss, and Kuenen, in his *Religion of Israel*, and Julius Wellhausen, in his Prolegomena to the *History of Israel*, to which is added his article in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, together with the Preface by Robertson Smith, published by Black of Edinburgh, is briefly something of this manner. As far as there is any agreement among the advocates of this hypothesis, they are pretty well agreed that the only portion Moses wrote

of the five books attributed to him is the Ten Commandments, and even these are altogether different from what they were when they left his hand. As to the rest, one portion they say is taken from a work written about the time of Uzziah. Deuteronomy was composed about the time of Josiah. Another portion is taken from a document to which they give the title of the Priestly Code. These were all blended together with great skill by one styled the redactor or editor, who lived about the time of Ezra, or, at any rate, near the close of the Babylonian Captivity. So that according to the upholders of the Higher Criticism, the writings which all along have been believed to be the writings of Moses never really existed till nine hundred or a thousand years after Moses is supposed to have breathed his last.

Now, one thing must follow; if the laws and religious economy of the Jews did not exist till after the return from Babylon, then all the history of the rest of the Bible is false and fabulous. Then the events of Sinai never happened. Then the Tabernacle was never set up. Then Solomon's temple was never built. Then David never wrote the Psalms. If the Pentateuch was not written till this late date, then all the other books of the Bible—at any rate, the histories and the prophecies—were written later still. Why? Because in all the other books of Scripture, except Job and Proverbs and Ecclesiastes—that is, in all the historical books, in the Psalms, and in almost all the prophets—the allusions to the laws and religion of the Pentateuch are so plain and so numerous that it must have been known to the writers of these portions of the word of God. Now, this really looks like criticism run mad. It reverses

all our notions of history as much as if one should argue that the Norman Conquest was the result of the battle of Waterloo, or that the Roman Catholic Church and system was the outcome of the Oxford movement, which, we think we know, took place some fifty years ago. A feeling of confusion worse confounded comes over us as we think of men of rare scholarship, of prodigious industry, and strong understanding, supporting what seem to be such manifest absurdities. This is the consequence of doggedly denying the supernatural in matters of religion. This is the effect of a fixed determination to account for religion upon natural grounds. This is evolution carried into the domain of theology. What is the theory opposed to this theory of development as it is named? The theory diametrically opposed to the development theory is known as the journalistic hypothesis. It differs very little from that which has been held by Jews and Christians from the beginning. It concedes that Genesis was compiled by Moses from documents, or from tradition, or both: that the last four books of the Pentateuch are a journal which Moses began to write, or to cause to be written, as soon as the departure out of Egypt was effected. What happened at Sinai was written at Sinai; what happened at Kadesh-Barnea, which seems to have been a halting-place for some eight-and-thirty years, was written there. And now we will leave it to any unprejudiced reader, after thoughtful study, to say whether these last four books of Moses have not all the appearance of a journal? They have all the signs of a camp origin, they read as if composed in paragraphs and patches. There are repetitions and sudden transitions from one subject to another. They are redolent

of the wilderness state. They have the air of being written by an eye and ear witness. There is a naturalness about them that we doubt whether any one could imitate. This theory is in perfect harmony with secular history. It is also in perfect agreement with the rest of the Bible; and it is in exact conformity with the New Testament as well as the Old. Which ever way we look there are difficulties, but they are immensely smaller upon this hypothesis than on any other. It must not be supposed that the sceptical critics have it all their own way, even in Germany. It has been a battle of intellectual giants. On the one hand, there have been such men as Eichhorn, De Wette, Gesenius, Winer, Ewald, Paulus, Baur, Strauss, Bleek; and these have been matched by such veterans as Hengstenberg, Keil, Hävernick, Tholuck, Delitzsch, Neander, Kurtz, Lange, Stier, and a host of others. In this country, also, both parties can boast of strong men; time only can determine with which the victory shall rest.

Is the question again asked, What is the effect of all this controversy upon the received doctrine of Inspiration? We answer, None whatever; and that for several reasons.

First, There is little or no substantial agreement among themselves. To quote Dr. Milman again. He justly remarks: "On the age and authorship of the books of Moses there is an infinite diversity of opinion. Indeed, an adversary of such opinions might almost stand aloof in calm patience, and leave the conflicting theorists to mutual slaughter." Another learned writer observes: "The most celebrated critics convict each other of false criticism. Hupfeld condemns Knobel. Ewald condemns Hupfeld and Knobel. Knobel condemns Hupfeld and Ewald.

If Knobel's criticism is correct, Hupfeld's is worthless. If Ewald is right, the others must be deficient in critical acumen. They may all be wrong, but only one of the three can possibly be right." It reminds one of the scene that was once witnessed by the pool of Gibeon, when twelve men from Benjamin and twelve from Judah, for the delectation of Abner and Joab, indulged in a little of what they called "play;" "and they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together."

In the first place, there is no agreement among them as to the materials out of which they say the Pentateuch has been compiled. Astruc thought he detected two main sources, but he thought he could detect fragments borrowed from ten other sources. De Wette was content with three. Ewald, as we have said, argued for seven. Vater and Hartmann contended that the Pentateuch consisted of mere fragments loosely held together, without design or order. Graf and his followers demand three chief contributors and an editor. Wellhausen refines on that, and thinks the two main documents ran through three editions.

There is perhaps still less agreement among them as to the time when the Pentateuch was written. Eichhorn, De Wette, Ewald, Bunsen, Bleek, admit that it is of the age, if not from the lips and pen, of Moses. Delitzsch believes it was written soon after the chosen people entered the Promised Land. Some assign it to the age of Saul, some to that of Samuel, some to that of Solomon. Some hold it to be the book found in the Temple, and known for the first time in the eighteenth year of the reign of

Josiah. Ewald holds that the seven documents from which the Pentateuch was taken were composed at different times, the first being the Book "of the Wars of Jehovah," while the last was composed some little while after the prophet Joel. At this, it is observed, "his great admirer Bunsen forsook him." As before stated, Wellhausen and his followers contend that it never was really in existence till after the captivity.

And, yet again, there is quite as much diversity of opinion as to who it was that put it into the form in which we know it. Some, as we have seen, have argued that Moses had the largest share in it. Some favour the idea that Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, had. Some believe Samuel wrote it, some Jeremiah, some Ezekiel, some Ezra. Ewald holds that Deuteronomy was written in the time of Manasseh by some one living in Egypt. Bunsen is confident it was written in the reign of Hezekiah. Now, what can be done with such a chaos as this? Is there anything in all this romancing to induce one to modify his creed, either with respect to inspiration or any other article of the faith?

The second reason is, that the findings of the so-called Higher Criticism have not been anything like generally accepted. And no wonder. The theory of Wellhausen is for the time being the most popular. But like Baur's Tendency hypothesis it will assuredly pass into oblivion. All we wish to say is this: If the notions of Wellhausen be correct and the Pentateuch turns out a forgery, a pious fraud of priests and a pious fraud of prophets combined, then with it goes the rest of the Old Testament and if the Old Testament perish, the New cannot survive; and

therefore all talk of inspiration is wasted breath. It is preposterous to speak of the Holy Ghost inspiring men to invent forgeries and falsehoods.

Well, but perhaps it will be said, Is there not a growing conviction that the Book of Genesis is a compilation? Yes, we think that is so. Well, must we not modify our notions of inspiration to bring them into harmony with this modern idea? No! in no wise. The holders of the highest doctrine of inspiration have always known that the historical parts of the Bible were to a great extent compilations. They could not be ignorant of the fact, that St. Luke expressly declares, that he compiled his Gospel from various authentic sources. The inspiration of selection has always been acknowledged. Well, but what if Daniel should turn out a forgery? What then? That would be a very serious matter, but we will wait till the demonstration is forthcoming. It is foolish to run a tilt at shadows. But has it not been proved that the Book of Isaiah was written by two different authors? Some say more. No, that is not proved as yet, and perhaps it never will be. But even upon that supposition there is nothing fatal to the doctrine of inspiration in that. The Book of Ezra had perhaps a two-fold authorship; at any rate there are some sixty years of interval between the first six chapters and the rest of the book. The Book of Psalms confessedly had many authors, and so for certain had the Book of Proverbs. But, again we say, the dual composition of Isaiah is not proven. "Back to facts, add to your theories verification." Avoid a panic. Above all, have faith in God and in God's truth. The ark of our salvation has weathered storms as violent and fierce as she is ever likely to encounter again.

If the history of the Church has any lesson to teach, it is this, that whenever a Goliath of Gath has come forth to defy the armies of the living God, God has always raised up a David to confront him. When Spinoza first published his objections against inspiration, there was considerable alarm and many deserted the standard. In Butler's day a wave of unbelief was passing over this nation, and in the preface to the first edition of his immortal work, a work the sceptics have never attempted to answer, he writes, "It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." This was written in May, 1736. In May, 1738, just two years after, John Wesley entered into the peace and hope of the Gospel, and that was the commencement of one of the mightiest revivals of religion with which the Church has been visited, since Peter preached the first Christian sermon on the day of Pentecost. One has been told that the death-blow had been given to our religion so often that we have come to disregard such announcements altogether. In 1874, not a quarter of a century ago, there appeared a book, the title of which was *Supernatural Religion.* It created a great sensation, and the more so because it was reported that Bishop Thirlwall was the author. It was predicted that this would prove the first nail in the coffin of Christianity. The late Bishop of Durham, that paragon of sacred scholarship, of whom any Englishman might be justly proud, be he Churchman or Dissenter, attacked the colossus, and it turned out to be a colossal sham. The present Bishop of Durham, a worthy successor of Butler and Lightfoot, has dealt with it in the

later edition of his book on the Canon of the New Testament, and dealt it such a blow as that we shall hardly be haunted by this apparition again.

But are there not traces of a later hand in the Book of Genesis? Yes, that is so. There are explanations given of the names of places to a generation living so long after the original was written that the meaning of the old names was well-nigh forgotten—*e.g.*, Gen. xiii. 18—"And Abram came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, *which are in Hebron.*" Gen. xiv. 2—"The king of Bela, *the same is Zoar.*" Gen. xiv. 3—"The vale of Siddim, *the same is the Salt Sea.*" Gen. xiv. 7—"And they returned and came to Mishpat, *the same is Kadesh.*" Gen. xvi. 14—"Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; *behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.*" Gen. xxii. 14—"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: *as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*" Gen. xxiii. 2—"And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; *the same is Hebron.*" Gen. xxiii. 19—"And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: *the same is Hebron.*" Gen. xxxv. 19—"And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, *the same is Bethlehem.*" Gen. l. 11—"The name of it was called Abel-mizraim, *which is beyond Jordan.*" Principal Cave, from whose book the foregoing list of anachronisms is taken, remarks, "Genesis has been *touched up*, so to speak, and modernised by a later reviser or revisers, but whether Samuel or Ezra, the revision was as conservative as respectful." And Dr. Pope exactly hits the mark when he says, "Much of the Scripture is the result of what would be called among men editorial arrangement. This extends

over a considerable portion of the Old Testament, and is what St. Luke, for instance, in the New, claims for his own function." It was what Dr. Liddon calls the inspiration of selection, and not that of Divine revelation or suggestion. Now, according to one of the most popular traditions of the Jews, Ezra gathered together the great synagogue, composed of such men as Haggai, Zechariah, Zerubbabel, and others, amounting altogether to one hundred and twenty. Ezra himself was a priest by descent, and a famous scribe. We are told of him again and again, that he was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses." He "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." "To teach the laws of his God to all that knew them not." To Ezra and his coadjutors is attributed the honour of settling the Canon of the Old Testament Scriptures, and of restoring and editing the whole sacred volume. "There can be no reasonable doubt that, at the beginning of the Christian era, the Jews had only one Canon of the sacred writings, defined distinctly in Palestine, and that this Canon was recognised by our Lord and His apostles." So, says Dr. Westcott, "we gathered from other sources what were the books constituting that Canon; they were precisely the same as those we *have in our English Old Testament.*"

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINALITY OF REVELATION

A WORD may be permitted as to the finality of the New Testament writings. No one proposes to add another book to those already considered of apostolic authority. Efforts have been made to reject some of those already inserted in the Canon, but hitherto without any sign of success. Four Epistles of Paul are confessed by the sceptics themselves to be unassailable—the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, and the two Epistles to the Corinthians. The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is still regarded as an open question, but that does not necessarily touch the question of its inspiration. It is certainly not a forgery, for it bears no name at all. In fact there is no probability of our losing any more of our New Testament than those portions which our last Revisers suggest as doubtful. No more can be added. The New Testament pronounces her own "Amen." The Bible begins with a paradise—a paradise that was lost. It ends with a paradise regained, and that cannot be lost. There is one book of the New Testament that was left unfinished—the Acts of the Apostles; and this is a suggestion. This book contains an account of the earliest triumphs of our religion, the later victories and successes are to be found in our Missionary Reports. They tell us of the work of the Holy

Ghost, and the brightening prospects of the world's conversion; and so the Acts of the Apostles will never be completed till the name of the last converted sinner is entered in the Lamb's book of life, and the last prodigal has returned home. Thank God, the word has lost none of its vitality and energy. It is still God's power unto salvation to all that believe it. And signs—attesting signs—still demonstrate the fact that God is in it. Still are moral miracles performed as wonderful as ever were accomplished. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. These were the credentials of the Divinity of Christ and His Gospel eighteen centuries ago. On these He rested His claims then, and we may be content to rest them upon the same basis to-day. There is nothing more convincing, nothing more likely to silence the gainsayers. Living our religion will do vastly more to silence our antagonists than arguing about it. If ever the world is to be lured into the fold of Christ it will be by the beauty of the Gospel, as seen in the life and character of its professors. Christ's power in the world to-day is the power of His wondrous beauty. It is this that turns the hate of His enemies into a love that will lay down its life for Him. Man is a free agent, you cannot force him into the kingdom of God, you can only draw him. When we speak of the finality of the Gospel we mean we are living in the last days. Our religion was once progressive; generation after generation it gradually unfolded its beauty and meaning. In this respect it has plentiful analogies in nature. Nothing comes into the world complete. It is first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in

the ear. But here the analogy ceases. When things in nature have reached maturity they begin to deteriorate and hasten to decay. It is not so in grace. Religion will never deteriorate. Churches may become corrupt and worldly. Nations may grow and flourish and then die out, but to Christ it was said, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom." "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." There will be no more Holy Scriptures written. Christ will come no more till He comes to close this dispensation of grace and begin the one of glory. We do not need another Bible. We do not need another Christ, any more than we need another sun. What we do want is a thorough understanding of the Bible we have; and we want another translation—not into words, but into practice. There is a possible understanding of the Book of God, that will make it to many of us another revelation. As we have it, it is abundantly sufficient for all purposes affecting our salvation, our *full* redemption; a Gospel, the great Head of the Church commissioned the Methodists to preach, and bear witness to by a life in harmony with His own life; and it is because of our unfaithfulness to that high calling that we are not more vigorous than we are to-day.

CHAPTER X.

THE FUTURE OF THE BIBLE.

LASTLY, what is the future of the Bible? Here, again, the Bible shall answer for itself. Take first the prophets. Nothing can be more charming and brilliant than the picture the Old Testament seers give us of Gospel times.

> "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Doth his successive journeys run."

"He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." "All shall know Him, from the least to the greatest." "The knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." "In the last days, saith God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh." "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before Him." "It shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it." "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord." "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire."

With sure and steady footsteps the golden ages are coming on, when peace and plenty, religion and piety, shall be established in our midst. Then the earth shall yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. Then, when the fatherhood of God shall be recognised, the grand brotherhood of man shall be completed. All jarring discords shall be hushed, envy and jealousy and bigotry be left to moulder in their quiet sepulchres, and nations shall shake hands across the grave of buried enmities. Then shall the soldier doff his livery of blood, and policemen no longer prowl about our streets. Then shall men beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into hooks for pruning vines. The dismantled fortress shall be overgrown with verdure, and the ivy shall wave her graceful fringes around its towers. Then shall the desert become a fruitful field, and the moral wastes as the garden of the Lord; and the earth shall enjoy one long lapse of Sabbatic rest, and the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. What has Christ to say about the future of His Church and Kingdom? With what Divine calmness He uttered the words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." "Many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." He spoke parables to the same effect. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his

field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Then again His parable of the leaven. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." What could be more prophetic of the small beginning, and of the growth and increase of that kingdom He came to establish? The apostles all caught the enthusiasm of their Master. "He must reign," said Paul, "till He hath put all enemies under His feet." Christ reigns now in the hearts of multitudes of loyal subjects. There is no feature of the Christ of prophecy more distinct than that of royalty. Melchizedek was a type of Him. One of the earliest titles He wore was Prince of Peace. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." Daniel is especially graphic, "I saw, and, behold, one like unto the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." This was to cheer the souls of the faithful during the captivity; after the captivity, another prophet rose to hold forth the lamp of hope. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation;

lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." We all know how literally this was fulfilled. Again and again is this title given Him by His followers. Once at least, without any ambiguity, He gave it to Himself. The seer of Patmos sees Him with many crowns upon His head, "and upon His vesture, and upon His thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." *Why*, the question might be asked, *when*, and *how*, was, and is Christ a King? The *when* is answered; directly after His resurrection His exaltation began. We have it from His own lips. Once just after that event, and then again sixty-three years after, when He said, "All power"—and power here means authority, right, privilege—"is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." "I have the keys of hell and of death." Paul speaks of "the power that was wrought in Him when God raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Again we are told, "God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name, that at (or in) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Nothing could be more expressive of actual present, supreme, and universal dominion than that. How poor, how weak, how literally insignificant is the mightiest of earthly potentates compared with Him! The universe so vast, so measureless, is His dominion. Angels and demons and all rational beings are under His control.

"He is before all things, and by Him all things consist," or "subsist." All the issues of providence are under His management. How impossible that any thing pertaining to our redemption should fail while He is the Captain of our salvation! How insane and impotent all opposition offered to Him and to His truth! *Why* does Jesus Christ reign? Because it is His right. A right by Divine appointment. "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." It was ever God's darling purpose to have a kingdom upon earth. This is what He tried to make of the descendants of Abraham in times past. A theocracy—a God government—was set up. Jehovah Himself was the King. The temple was His palace; the priests His courtiers; the tithes were a sort of land tax; the offerings were His revenue. God gave them their laws. He established their religion. He went out with their armies. Of Him they asked counsel. But the secular theocracy failed. The people desired a human king, and God punished them by giving them what they wished. The next thing was, God resolved to set up a spiritual kingdom, and at the head of this He placed His Son. The second Psalm is the coronation ode. Daniel as usual is very explicit. He says, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." The idea of a kingdom is complex. It involves many things, among the rest it is a combination of forces for aggression and defence. The English kingdom is that. And so is the kingdom of Christ. "He must reign till He hath put down all rule and all authority and

power." "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." *Must*, because so said the prophecies that went before on Him. *Must*, because this is the Father's promise, and God cannot deny Himself. *Must*, because He is the only power capable of grappling with evil; and upon the vanquishing of evil the fate of all the higher intelligences depends. If moral evil gained the upper hand, the moral universe would become a second chaos. Were evil omnipotent and triumphant a state of anarchy would follow, so wasteful and destructive, that when it had passed away all that made for the honour of God and the welfare of His creatures would have suffered a total annihilation. All enemies must be put under His feet. As in St. John's time, so now, there are many Antichrists. Every bad man is an Antichrist, and there are also anti-Christian systems and institutions; of these Paganism is clearly one. Its gods many and lords many are a dishonour to the Supreme God, and its senseless idolatry is degrading to man. Its deities are the embodiments of the worst vices native to the human heart. Its temples are dens of licentiousness. "It is a shame to speak of the things that are done by them in secret." It is as true now as when Paul wrote it: "The sacrifices they offer, they offer to devils, and not to God." Their religion is a compound of lust and blood. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." The masses of the people in England are degraded because they are NOT religious; the masses of India are still more degraded because they *are* religious. Another enemy to Christ is Judaism. Judaism hated and rejected and crucified Him, and it hates and rejects Him still. Here is a fearful illus-

tration of an apostate Church, once high in God's favour, but so completely is its attitude changed that it is now to be reckoned among the enemies of God's Son. But the implacable opposition of Israel will some day be overcome. The veil shall be taken from their heart. "They shall look upon Him Whom they have pierced;" and in their deep repentance, "They shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his first-born." And because of their repentance God will abundantly pardon. "As it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" "and so all Israel shall be saved." Not those that have perished; but there shall come a time when all the descendants of Abraham shall believe in Christ as the Saviour, and live in the enjoyment of His salvation. And "if the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Another anti-Christian system is Mohammedanism. Like Jews and Christians they believe in one God. They are not idolaters. They scrupulously eschew all pictures and images representing God or the saints. If they entered some of our Christian Churches, they would denounce us as heathens. But, after all, Mohammedanism is in many respects the opposite of Christianity, and as such is an authority and power that must be put down. Popery is another anti-Christian system. But there is yet another system, if indeed it can be called a system, that stands in an attitude of direct hostility to Christ, and that is infidelity. There will be nothing said here against the determination to abolish shams, against the resolution to dig through the sand and the clay of

second-hand beliefs, and to get down to the bed rock of eternal truth. No better service can be rendered Christ and His cause than by doing that. What is here meant, is that enmity against God, which St. Paul considers the very essence of the carnal mind, that unreasoning antipathy that induced Voltaire to conclude his letters with his favourite motto, "Crush the Wretch," meaning the Lord Jesus. That is a species of insanity as weak as it is wicked. In a word, it is Christ's declared purpose to wage unceasing war with sin in all its ten thousand forms and phases; "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

But now, what is the weapon He will use in this grand contest? The Bible says, the *Bible*. "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." All thought of carnal warfare may be instantly dismissed. They are but figures of speech, which represent Him as gathering His forces for literal battle. The Prince of Peace cannot be the author of carnage. He told His mistaken follower to put his sword into its sheath; for, said He, "he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." St. John tells us, five times over, of the glorified and risen Christ, that out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword, and that with this He effected the slaughter of the last remnant of His enemies. Does not the prophet tell us that "a rod shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse," and that "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked?" Does not St. Paul tell us that the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth the man of sin, the son of perdition?

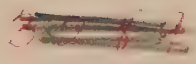
Are we not told again that "the word of God is quick and powerful"—living and active—"sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." And this all tells us what the Bible of the future has to do. There is one meaning to these Scriptures. The meaning is: the truth is mighty and shall prevail. It is the force of truth that turns men's minds and converts their wills and changes their course of action. It is light that conquers darkness, and intelligence that kills ignorance. It is virtue that destroys vice. It is faith, begotten of the truth, that overthrows infidelity. Christ kills His enemies by converting them into friends. One of the grandest maxims of our religion is, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." It was thus He vanquished Saul of Tarsus, by convincing him that He was Jesus, and so converted him into His most devoted apostle. To all appearance Christ's conquest of the world will be gradual and slow—slow as we think; but He who has eternity to work in need not make haste. Certainly the victory is far from complete as yet, "We see not yet all things put under Him," but it is progressing. The Christian religion is the mightiest force in operation in the world to-day. It is most likely so, that, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, the Apocalypse is waiting for an interpreter, yet there are certain broad outlines, the significance of which we may feel we have not misread. It is the prophetic history of the Church of Christ, from the time He left it till He comes again. And therefore the whole of it has not yet been fulfilled. There is no mistaking this; it foretells of

conflicts. The huge bestial world-powers portrayed there with such singular distinctness, and yet shrouded in so much mystery, are ceaselessly at war with the saints of the Most High. At the times of their greatest peril they are always delivered, and though put to death they experience a resurrection. But no sooner has one storm passed away than another is seen to gather. The song of victory is followed by the clash of weapons and the din of war. As of old, we shout up to the watchman on his tower, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" And he leans over the battlements and speaks down to us, "The night cometh and also the morning." It is night yet. Darkness broods over land and sea. The night cometh *and also the morning.* Oh, yes, the dawn must come! The longest, darkest night that ever spread her ebon pall over the Arctic regions was followed by the day. But at present, and for long, there is nothing for it but the Church of Christ must work and watch and wait. Her warfare is not yet accomplished, and will not be till the final close — even after the millennium, which, in whatever light we view it, we are all agreed it means that Christ will in a special manner reign on earth, and reign long. If it be so that we must understand that a day, in prophetic language, means an ordinary year, then this one thousand years of prophetic time must be understood to mean three hundred and sixty-five thousand years of literal time. One thing is especially significant of this period—Satan will be chained, evil will be under powerful restraints. To make the least of it, the millennium will be a glorious and widespread revival of religion. All the world will be under the influence of a

general Pentecost. In a blessed sense the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ. Society will be in a surprising measure sanctified. "In that day shall there be upon the bells (or bridles) of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts." God's word shall have free course and be glorified. They shall all be taught of God. This world and the people in it will be altogether different from what we know it to be now. And yet, after this reign of righteousness, after this wonderful development of the beauty of holiness, and the power of grace, and the suppression of evil, there follows a terrible apostasy. Satan will be loosed again; the camp of the saints and the city of God will be besieged, and from the four quarters of the earth hostile armies will gather to battle, the number of which is as the sand of the sea. But this rebellion will be fought down, and the final victory shall be given to Christ and His saints. Now is this true, or is it a romance—a dream? Has Christ risen? Is all power given unto Him? Has God in very deed exalted Him to highest dignity and power, and put all things under His feet, and given Him to be Head over all things to the Church? Is Christ Christ? I appeal to you as, in the main, His professed disciples. Is there any truth in the Old and New Testament whatever? Then Christ is true and Christ is King, and consequently He will take care of those sacred writings, to the inspiration of which He pledged His honour and His truth; He will take care of His own word, and the word of His apostles. That word shall never perish; that word shall

never fail! By that word Christ will save the nations. And then, from the Everlasting Father and from an adoring universe, the invitation will go forth—

> "Come, then, and added to Thy many crowns,
> Receive yet one as radiant as the rest;
> Due to Thy last and most effectual work,
> Thy work fulfilled—the conquest of a world."



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